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**THE  
SPELL OF EGYPT**

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## FOREWORD

Somebody wrote: "The books that have been written about Egypt, would dam the Nile," and since he wrote it enough more books have been written about Egypt to sink a dahabiyeh in the Father of Waters.

Nevertheless, Egypt, which sometimes seems to have been the beginning of almost everything that plays a part in the contemporary life of man, is always new. The marvel is not the number of books about Egypt, but that so few have been written. Assuming that every book has its topic, there is reason for wondering why the writers of the world ever went beyond that inexhaustible land of topics. A book might be written about every square foot of Egyptian soil, every monument that raises its head above the ground, every cave in its honeycombed mountains, and every ripple upon the broad bosom of the river that gives the country life.

Maspero, the famous Egyptologist, told me that, in his opinion, all the research and exploration of the past in this ancient country, all the knowledge that has been gained by the savants

of the world, to the present time, is but a fore-runner, merely a beginning, of what will follow in the future. This remark, which referred chiefly to the purely technical and scientific probing into the past as related to the present and future, led me to believe that it applied as well to the un-technical and un-scientific view of Egypt.

The land of the hoary past has become the playground of the present. But whereas most of the playgrounds of the world have been manufactured by contemporary men from stucco, and with imitation minarets and towers, the builders of Egypt began their task soon after the earth had become a fit habitation for man, and constructed it from granite, hewed it from marble, and moved mountains of stone in their gigantic scheme of construction.

Seeking a new playground, I went to Egypt and boarded the dahabiyeh "Seti," chartered by E. M. Newman for a cruise up the Nile. Soon the dust of Egypt seemed to cause recollection of every other playground to fade from my vision. Other countries seemed to be imitations of the amazing original. So I stayed on, after the dahabiyeh had finished its voyage and had been moored to the bank at "Pharaoh's Garden" on the Island of Rhoda near Cairo.

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When Maspero assured me that the half had not been told in regard to the past, I was reminded that less than half has been told about the present. If there are myriads of unwritten books in the land of the lotus, there are likewise "libraries unrecorded" in its present. Thus this additional testimony to its everlasting charm.

Jewish patriarchs of the antique world went to Egypt for grain, and found it; ancient Grecian philosophers went for knowledge, and found it; I went for enjoyment, and was rewarded, as were the others.

ARCHIE BELL.

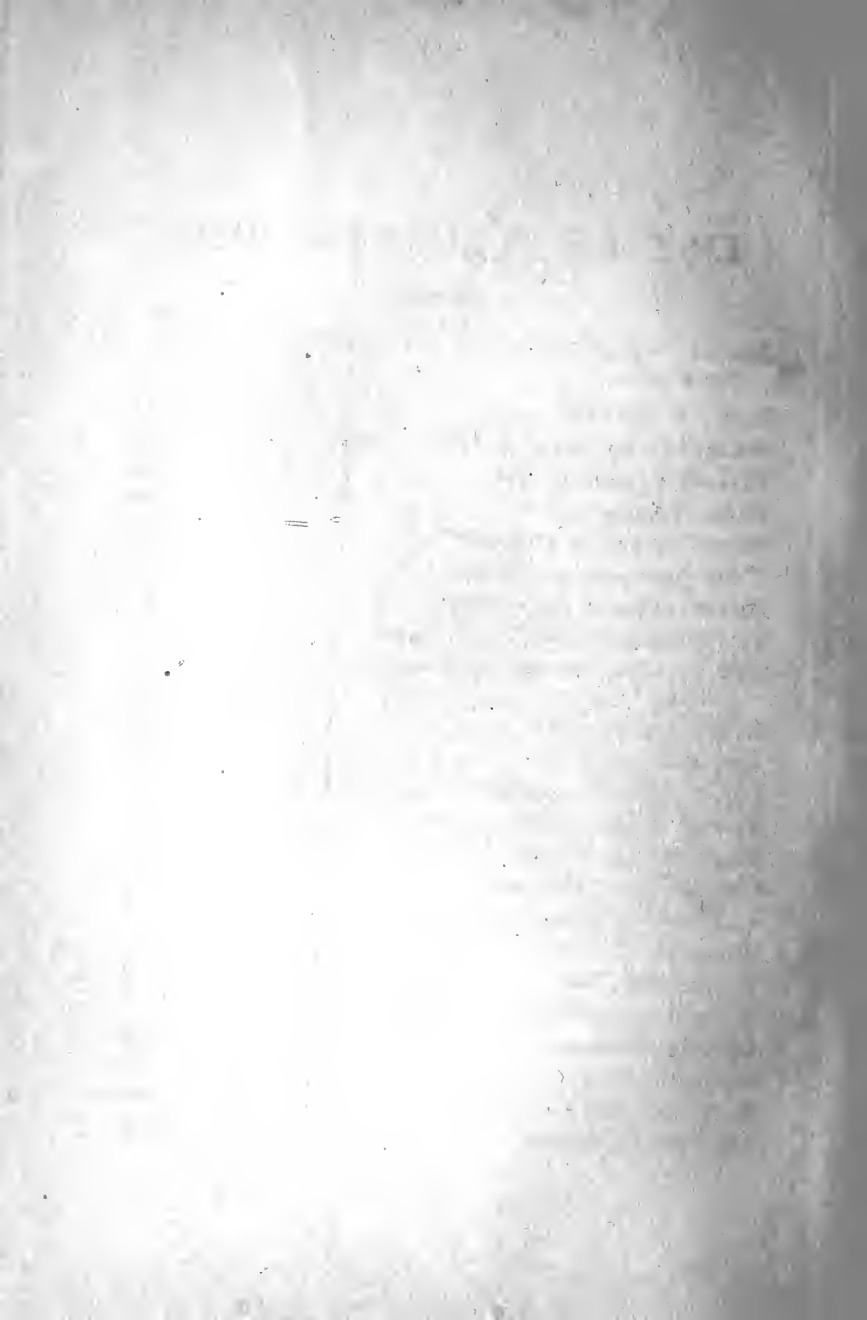
Cleveland, 1915.



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# THE SPELL OF EGYPT

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## CHAPTER I

### A FLOWERY PATHWAY

**O**URS was to be a sentimental and leisurely tour of Egypt. That was agreed upon long before we went aboard the ship that was to carry us from American shores. If there are many different methods of surveying the ancient "river that is Egypt," and the temples and tombs that border its banks, there are also many ways of approaching the sunny land of the Pharaohs. And the traveler, although he will be given no credit for that distinction, should be of logical mind. If he has decided merely to lay aside his office papers for a few weeks and thinks, as he glances over the itineraries and glaring placards in a tourist agency, that Egypt offers as welcome a change from his daily routine as South America, Hawaii or the North Cape, it will be well for him to book passage on the swiftest ocean grey-

hound that will carry him to European shores.

Once on the continent, he may rush by express train to Marseilles, Naples or Brindisi and make connections with a mail boat that seems to make a secondary consideration of passengers, one that will toss and roll in the fickle Mediterranean, but which will land him in Alexandria at the hour scheduled. A train, also carrying the mail, will whisk him over the borderland of delta and desert, and, scarcely before he is aware of it, he will find himself under a palm in the garden of Shepherd's, or seated on the terrace watching that endless procession where East meets West of which he had read highly coloured accounts when waiting for his tickets to be stamped back home. Or he may have telegraphed ahead for the dahabiyeh that will be waiting for him by the river bank. Perhaps he will have an almost frantic desire to capture the Nile record for speed between Cairo and Assouan. Men have drifted for weeks over the same waters, but they were not men of the twentieth century. Where ancient galleys loitered against contrary winds or currents for days, the steamboat now plows along at terrific speed; and there is always a relief in knowing that if one tire of the monotonous river, there is a railway on the river banks. The dahabiyeh

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may be left for the remainder of the trip to its trusty crew, while one dashes along overland, merely touching the so-called "high spots" of Egypt—Karnak, Luxor and Assouan, where tea is served at the usual hour for tea at home, where luncheon is as formal as in a Paris hotel, and where there is all the parade and glitter around the dinner-table that one might find along the French or Italian Riviera in February.

Then, one day, the train whisks one back to Cairo. More cooling drinks and cigarettes on Shephard's terrace, and, almost before he is aware of it, again the breathless tourist reverses his outgoing program and finds himself back among his office papers. He has "done" Egypt. Ask him and he dares not admit otherwise; Egypt is an ideal place for a change and rest. He advises his friends to take the tour that he enjoyed last season. "All the arrangements are now made for you in a moment," he declares, "all they want is your money; and, when they get that, you enjoy all the comforts of home."

Too great speed cannot be recommended to our old friend, "the tired business man" and his wife, who feels that she must be able to converse "intelligently" of Egypt as her grandmother

spoke of Saratoga. For the barriers have been let down. One travels to Cleopatra's country as comfortably, and, perhaps, with less fatigue than one formerly reached the American spas. Wealth and fashion have decreed in favour of Egypt just as they did in favour of Pompeii or Versailles, and the decree was no more compelling in that older day than it is in ours. One believes that the capricious dame is becoming a little more discriminating in the selection of locale for her comedy of manners. Perhaps the merest glance at Egypt is preferable to no view at all. Perhaps there is no heart so insensible to the beautiful that it will not quicken to the spell of the Nile country. At least, the bustling tourist deposits his dollars in a land where there appears to be sore need of them, and he is a shrewd and wise man who never contributes his money to a less satisfying cause.

But we had made different plans. Perhaps we had read of that French priest encountered in the fastnesses of the Canadian Rockies. Asked for an explanation of such wanderings, he replied that he had once dreamed that he died and at the inquisition of Saint Peter, "What did you think of the earth where you spent so many years?" he was obliged to admit that he had never seen anything of the world beyond the

French village where he was born. When he awakened, he vowed that he would see something of the beautiful world that had been created for man, and, when discovered amid the wonders of the Rocky Mountains, he was fulfilling the vow. Perhaps we had not dreamed of death and the serious consequences of our necessary reply if a question were addressed to us regarding a speedy impression of Egypt, but we held to a mental opinion similar to that of the priest. Ours was to be a sentimental pilgrimage. We would not inhale the atmosphere at a gulp between luncheon and dinner. We preferred not to breathe it at all, but to remain long enough for it to penetrate the pores of our skin and finally reach our hearts, impelled by the vertical rays of a tropical sun. And our first move in line with this determination was to select some leisurely going Atlantic steamer that would plow along an ocean lane between the two countries, one that would take us in its keeping at an American port and then gradually, but surely, carry us to the bosom of old Egypt. We wanted Egypt to arrive by slow degrees. We wanted to approach it with meek humility, as children craving adoption, and not as rude outsiders, merely brushing its elbows at meeting. Perhaps it was too much to ask and expect, but we

relied upon her ancient and maternal magnetism. At least we felt that we had prepared ourselves to go upon the stage so alluringly prepared with settings that men, since there were men upon the face of the earth, have felt the irresistible summons.

To the leisurely going traveler it seems that the pathway between America and Egypt is strewn with flowers. There is a long stretch of water that has no turning and with only a couple of flower patches that prompt one to hesitate before he arrives at that giant granite gateway, Gibraltar, the Pillars of Hercules, which seem appropriately to be sentinels guarding the approach of trespassers. Beyond them the east-bound tourist knows there is the land of mystery, but the unknown of the past is no more mystifying to the modern mind than was the broad expanse of blue that lay westward of Gibraltar when the ancient easterner was broadening his horizon by following the setting sun. The great gateway seems to separate the old from the new, the present from the past; but its doors are open, inviting frequent communication between the two. The flowing pathway bears the people of the world, inside or outside, as they choose; and the gate becomes but an incident, like the passing of a stile in a long,



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flowery lane, over which the sun is constantly shining. And yet one cannot fail to recall that perhaps this brilliant lane is not so sumptuously flowered as in that earlier day when the beautiful continent stretched from shore to shore, across the great waste that now takes the fastest steamers several days to cover. But to-day there are flowery milestones, little groups of islands that no doubt were one day the mountain peaks where the gods and goddesses of mythology lived and became immortal. The volcanoes grumbled and the beautiful country fell into the ocean, according to the scientists, and cruising around in these sapphire summer seas one likes to accept the scientific conjecture.

Nowadays, however, the Atlantic liner plows along several days with its bow towards the east before land is sighted. And when, finally, after six days on the ocean, we came on deck and saw a deep purple line on the horizon that we suspected was the first of the Azores islands, we felt that we were approaching the first of the beautiful outposts of that tremendous fortress Gibraltar, and we were much impressed by this first view of islands that have too long been neglected by Americans who now seem to penetrate everywhere, but who, in their rapid flights to Europe, and back, seldom obtain more than

a passing glimpse of one of the most beautiful of all Portugal's possessions.

Of course we knew that we were to visit the Azores. The tourist agencies have an attractive way of announcing all of these little side jaunts in a long cruise. Somehow, from a glance at one of the advertising posters, you get the idea that in these beautiful islands all is summer. There is usually a dusky maiden posed under a palm tree. Perhaps she is languidly fanning herself or waving a scarf to a passing ship. It is romantic and attractive. But beyond this picture of the Azore maiden, a palm tree, and the fact that we were to take on a load of pineapples at Ponta Delgada, we did not know much about the spot on the earth's surface that we were approaching. The Azores was in all of our minds a rather indistinct name recalled from childhood geographies. We knew that they were out here somewhere in the ocean, but none of us realized that when the ship was pointing towards Ponta Delgada, we were approaching the third largest and most important city belonging to the Portuguese republic—honours resting respectively with Lisbon, the capital, and Oporto, which most of us have imagined was the home of port wine, although we didn't know much else about it.

The ship's chart, posted in the companionway to show the daily runs, had a few dots marked "Azores." But what was there? It is always exciting to approach land from the sea, and doubly so when it is strange land. It is doubly exciting when it is not only terra incognita to yourself, but to the fifty-year-old lady who sits next to you at table and during the breakfast hour insists upon telling you where you should abide when you are in Amsterdam, Rome or Florence. She knows where there are cheap pensions run by respectable but impoverished English women in most of the islands of the sea and the great cities beyond the sea. But even she was forced to admit that she knew nothing of the Azores. It seemed to distress her to be obliged to make this admission.

It has always seemed to me quite incredible that the tourist agencies, so alert in other matters, have quite overlooked the talking lady of fifty years. She is heard by every one on a steamship. Her age entitles her to a certain respect, and she can do more drumming up for hotels and "sights" than all the tourist literature that is printed. After they had overheard her at the table, I saw a number of people gathering around her on deck and in the salon. "Where would you advise stopping in this or

that city?" And she had an answer for every one of them that appeared to satisfy.

We looked in the ship's library for something about the Ilhos dos Açores, as the Portuguese know their possession in the Atlantic, but the purser tells us that unless we have some commercial interests there, we are not likely to know even their location. They lie about two thousand miles from the American coast. And we are not so ignorant at home. We know who discovered America, and we think we know who discovered the North Pole, but no candidate for having discovered the Azores has yet proved his case. They have maps in Venice bearing the date of 1436 that show the islands correctly placed, but nobody knows how the wise geographers came to place them there. The Isles of Hawks received their name from the birds that frequent the seashore. It is possible that the rather unstable government of Portugal has had a deterrent influence upon the proper development of the islands, and there is a distinct rivalry between them and the Madeira group, which lies only two days further south, but one quickly changes his opinion of the insular Portuguese after arriving here. The people are industrious for semi-tropical peoples, every square foot of land seems to be under cultiva-

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tion, and it is the opinion of many travelers that the islands are just coming into their own and that they will be much heard from in the next few years.

The Azores were an asylum for broken-down aristocracy of Portugal, and there are many residences that have belonged to members of the nobility.

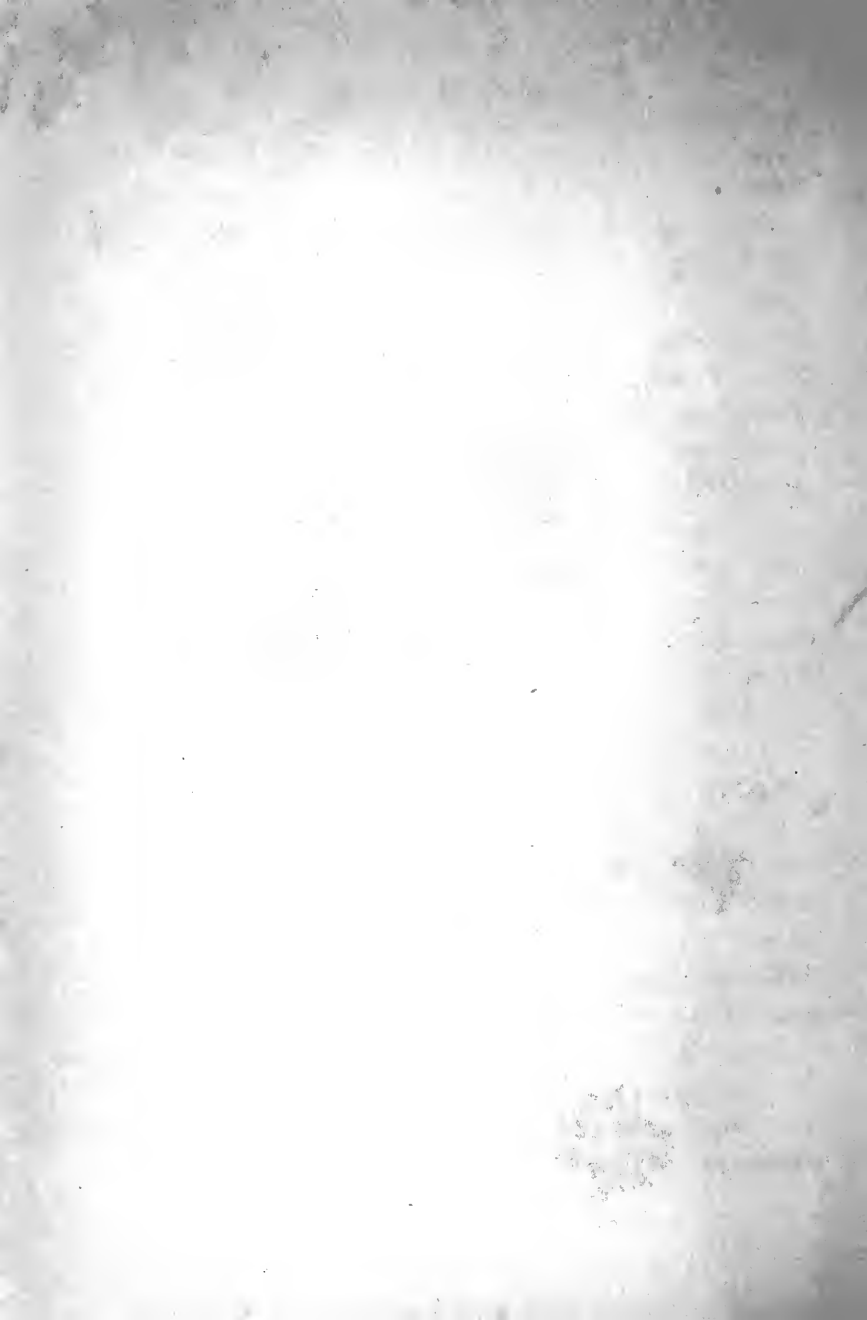
The most convincing ocular proof of such things as the Darwinian theory of evolution is the man-size ape which rides bicycles, smokes and does other things in imitation of man. So the best modern proof of the lost Atlantis, is the chain of volcanic islands that dot the Atlantic ocean from Gibraltar westward. The hilltops are still spouting smoke and hot water—although there has not been a violent eruption in this particular group for something like three centuries, but these big piles of lava and ashes are the ruins of a great catastrophe. They would remain a smoking pile of ashes and lava like Vesuvius if it were not for the warm gulf stream that flows along in this direction. As soon as the waters touch them, they seem to burst into bloom. Palms wave on their shores, great masses of flowers literally crowd themselves over the rocky walls from the coast-line to near the top of the hills. They produce the

finest fruit known to man, the sea hereabouts swarms with fish, and life must be easy, although it might become monotonous with its everlasting calm.

We sat peering towards the beautiful island of St. Michael's, the most important of the Azorean group, and, although we did not know it at the time, we were destined to peer for some time. Off in the bay lay the beautiful city of Ponta Delgada, with its white, pink and green houses, surrounded by coloured walls and brilliant gardens, so that it all looked like a turn in the kaleidoscope, but the sea was running too high to attempt a landing. The captain kept our ship well out to sea, for there are treacherous rocks hereabouts, some of which reach almost to the surface, and it is not in the nature of sea captains to venture close to land so that their expectant passengers may have a closer view of what is delighting them. None of the larger lighters ventured near to us, but, after a while, towards noon, we saw a tiny launch bobbing around on the waves like a cork. It had bravely ventured from the little stone pier and was coming out to us with the port doctor, the customs officials, and all of the other officials of port. The little craft afforded us much amusement as we watched it jump from wave to wave,



WOMEN OF THE AZORES IN STREET DRESS.





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but after its passengers had been safely landed we ventured the request that some of us be permitted to accompany the expedition on its homeward trip. We were assured that our ship would lie at anchor until evening—and we had come a long way. It might be our only chance to see Ponta Delgada. And of all places in the world, some of us soon began to feel that we wanted to see Ponta Delgada most.

The captain assured me that the sea was likely to become calmer during the day; at any rate, it would not be any worse towards evening in all probability; so they who desired became the guests of Portuguese officialdom for the day. And although the launch bobbed up and down a good deal, although we had several duckings and considerable trouble in reaching the thing as we were let down at the steamer's side, we landed at the old stone stairway, at the foot of the city, without mishap. "Never was any one drowned trying to come ashore at Ponta Delgada," said the Portuguese doctor; so we took hope for our return voyage and merrily began the rounds of our terra incognita.

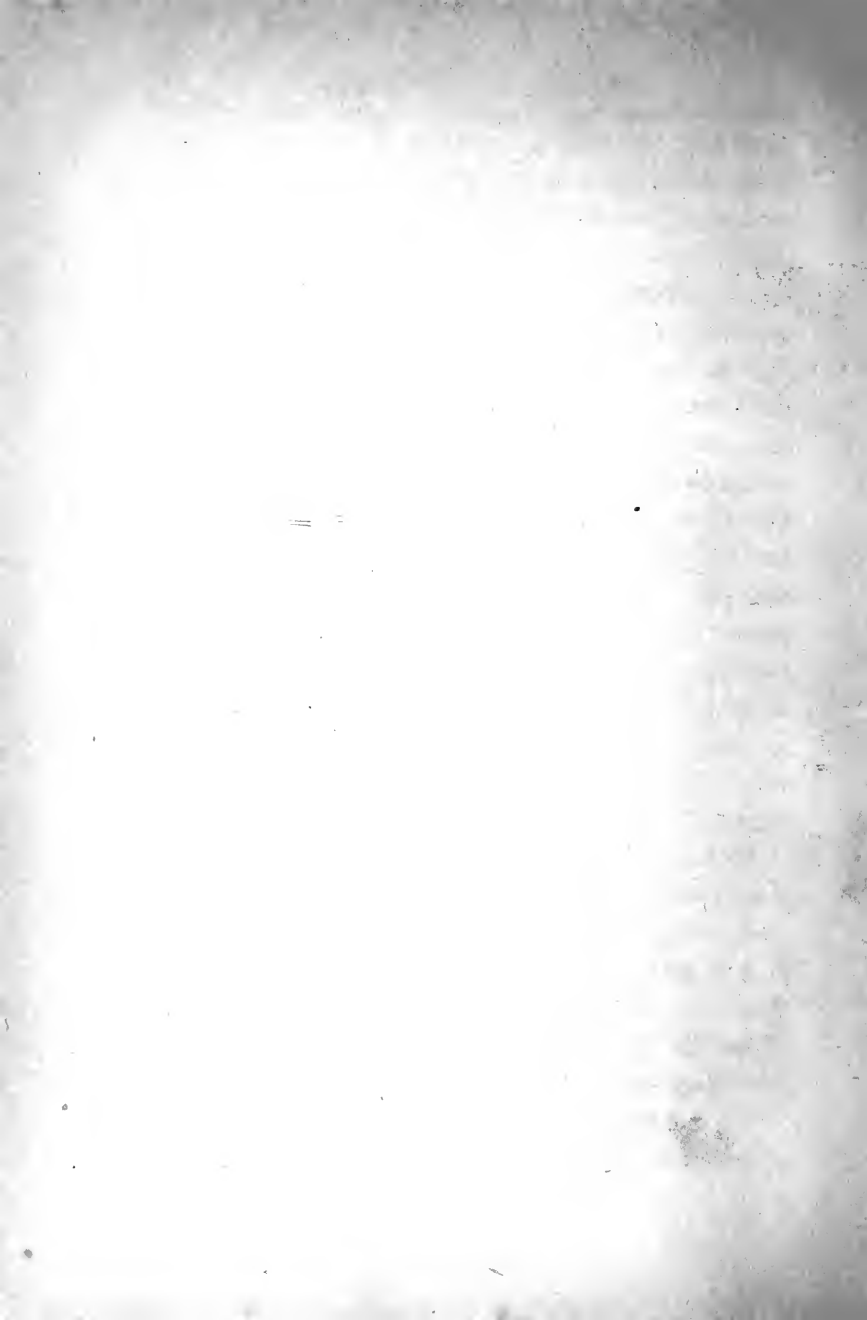
About the first thing that struck our eyes was the peculiar dress of the natives. Of course, the inhabitants are insular in everything—all people are if they live on islands, even English-

men. But they are a long way from the beaten paths of the world in these islands, and while some of the smart folk who come from Lisbon follow the Paris styles and keep up a certain state, the rest of the natives do not seem to care. What was good enough for their grandfathers is good enough for them. The men seem to be a little more "progressive" than the women. They have quite adopted the European costume, but the women cling to old styles, and it seemed as we walked up the first street, amid the strangely garbed women, that we had landed at some island where the female sex belonged to a sisterhood. They wear the capote, a long dark blue cape, that is surmounted by a big hood that buries the wearer's face far from sight. At the back the thing is supported by whalebone or wire, so that when madam floats down the street she looks much like a full rigged ship. Further out in the country, however, we realized that the ladies we had seen in town were "dressed up." The peasants are picturesquely garbed in bright colours, and most of the women seemed to be carrying jars of water or baskets which they poised gracefully on their heads or shoulders, sometimes balancing two or more as they plodded along back to their cottages.

For many years these islands basked in the



PEASANT WOMAN, AZORES.



sun, and were visited chiefly by leisurely English, Spanish and Portuguese travelers, who came ostensibly to cure their bodily ills—and some of them remained to grow lazy in the enervating climate. Now the Atlantic liners frequently pause here for a few hours, giving many people the chance to run ashore and swarm the postcard shops, visit the gardens, to which visitors are admitted on “steamer days,” visit the plazas that are the center of all cities of Latin building—something more beautiful and characteristic than American city builders have yet devised—and on these days the little island folk prove themselves to be wise business men. Perhaps they lounge about and rest a good deal of the time, but when they sight a steamer anchored off their port they fully appreciate what we mean by the “struggle for existence,” These are “pay days.”

If it is a Yankee steamer they gaily decorate the front of their little shops with the Stars and Stripes—and I am told that it is the same thing if a German or Italian boat venture this way. They reap a neat harvest these wonderful days. Then the steamers depart, the flags come down and they settle back into their routine life.

At the top of the landing place I was politely greeted by Michael. I did not know this young

gentleman before, but his memory will remain green with me. He quickly assured me that it would afford him the greatest pleasure of his life to escort me around the beautiful island, and, not wishing to deprive any one of such a pleasure, I engaged him, and gave myself over to his tender mercy.

Michael was a fine-looking chap, who might have been taken for his former lord and master, King Manuel of Portugal. Unqualifiedly I declare him to be the politest robber I have ever met. But he had his compensations. Evidently he was something of a "sport," as such things go in Ponta Delgada, and he spoke sneeringly of some of the customs of his fatherland. For example, I asked him if they ever had a bull fight in Ponta Delgada. "Yes," he replied, "we have them, but they are pretty tame affairs." Oh, this Michael was well-versed in American slang. Assuredly we were not the first Yankees who had ever entrusted themselves to his guiding!

From Michael's description, the bull fights here must be a little tamer than some of those similar affairs that are held in the faraway Spanish countries to the south of the United States. "The bulls are tame as kittens," said he, "and they put padding around their horns

so they cannot hurt anything they touch. It takes a lot of teasing to get them started at all.” However, it was plain from his description that the little fellow apes the big fellow. The nobility and aristocracy attend the exhibitions, dress gaily and imagine that they are having a good time of it. And their brothers and sisters in Lisbon and Madrid can do no more.

As we drove around, Michael assured us that oranges used to sell for about a cent a hamperful—about thirty or forty of them. We found no such bargains, and the polite gentleman who handed us a big sack of golden fruit charged an English shilling. But we were well paid for the expenditure. If there are sweeter oranges in the world I have not come across them, and one cannot expect the owner of a plantation to raise more than about a half dozen oranges for a cent.

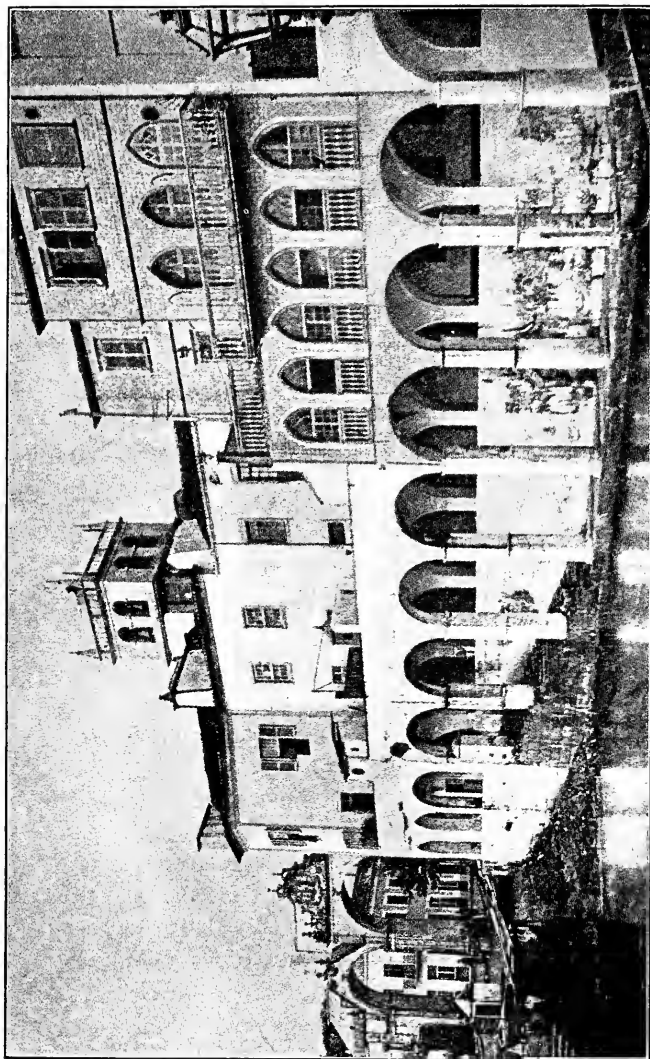
Perhaps the fruit crop has fallen off, or the demand has become greater, for Michael says no longer do the farmers leave the oranges to the pigs, in great piles under the trees. They ship them to England and to Portugal, when the big ships come to carry away the pineapples; and in London this Azorean fruit is commencing to bring fancy prices. All the pineapples are raised under glass, but no artificial heat is ad-

ministered, and the fruit grows to be a foot in length, is of peculiar flavour and much desired by the dealers. We drove out to one large farm that was "under glass," and the old gentleman in charge, with Michael acting as interpreter, told that he had made one shipment that netted him something like \$1.50 a-piece.

The streets of Ponta Delgada are narrow, paved with wood or chunks of lava, and they seemed to be quite clean. The entire city seems to be spotted here and there at frequent intervals with recreation parks similar to the plazas of European cities. But here nature has assisted the landscape gardener by the strange volcanic formations. There are many beautiful natural grottoes, over which wisteria vines hang their purple bloom in dense clouds. There are palms and tree ferns, countless varieties of century plants, bougainvillea vines as large at the base as the trunks of trees, masses of red geraniums that tower toward the top of garden walls and great fuchsia shrubs as large as small trees at home. Calla lilies burst into bloom everywhere. During our ride into the country we plucked great armsful of them to bring back to the steamer dining-room tables. We saw heliotrope plants six feet high.

Then, as a grand climax to the floral profu-





PONTA DELGADA.



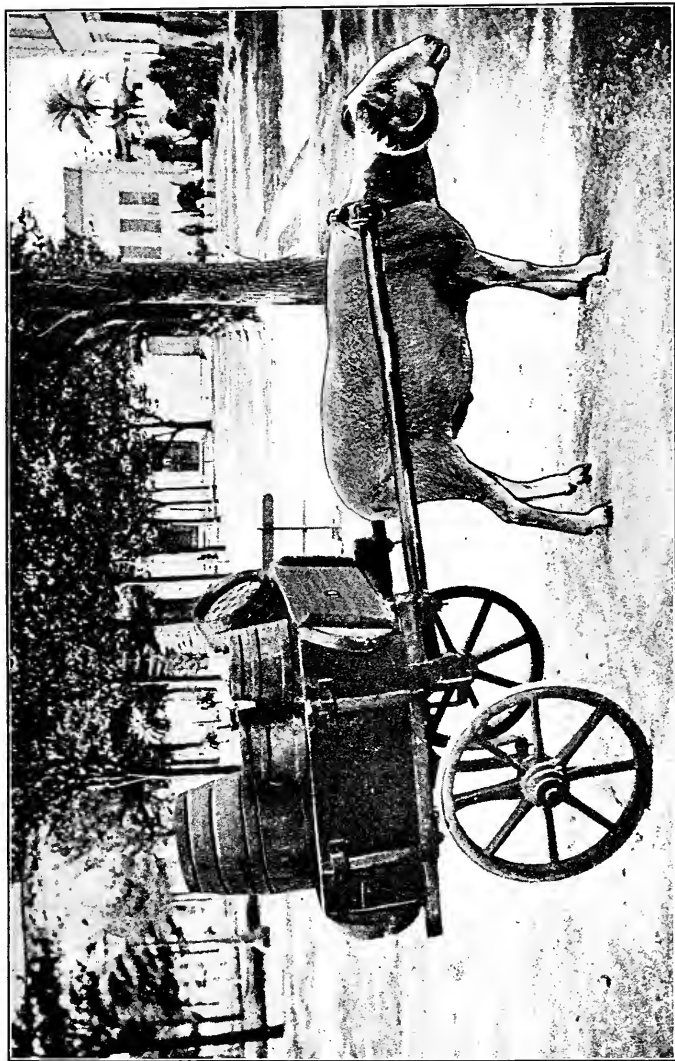
sion, we drove out to the palace of the Portuguese nobleman, Jose Do Canto, where the late King Carlos of Portugal was entertained when he made his memorable visit to the islands. Here is a wonderful garden, which contains three thousand distinct species of plants, botanic wealth that cannot be matched in many other localities of the earth's surface. After seeing this garden we somehow lost our enthusiasm for the others that we saw. The fine old gentleman left it to the city when he died, and his will contained a certain amount yearly for its maintenance that the people of the city he loved and its visitors might have the pleasure of seeing it.

Over many of the doors of cottages in the country we noticed little bunches of herbs. These are charms against the evil spirit, and while Michael assured us that this was very "old-fashioned" and "ridiculous," we had several glimpses into these neat and well-kept cottages, and as the smiling faces peered out at us as we passed we felt certain that either the herbs or something had helped to keep trouble from their doors. It seems to me that here I found the best evidence of the fact that man adapts himself to the conditions in which he finds himself, and usually makes the best use of what lies

within his reach. Here, for the first time, I saw sheep used as beasts of burden, and it was not so uncommon that the few I saw seemed to be the exception. Almost all the small carts being drawn about the city were hitched to little dumb animals, which bear some physical resemblance to the goat, but are not exactly like the goat in disposition. Perhaps there is no good reason why a sheep should not draw a cart, but one rather thinks it has performed its mission after it has produced wool and then becomes the mut-ton of our tables.

When Michael found that I was very much interested in this outfit, which was peddling wine about the city, he seemed to come to the conclusion that I would be interested in vehicles of all sorts, so he proudly brought me to the entrance of the office of a steamship company where the agent's automobile was standing beside the curb. There are only two or three automobiles in the islands, and when I showed much more interest in the sheep carts and the bullock carts, on which sugar cane was being drawn to the steamer, he did not have much respect for my judgment of things.

No visit to the Azores would be complete without some comment upon the peculiar currency system. Soon after one lands he visits the post-



WINE CART DRAWN BY SHEEP.



office, for he is certain to send a card or letter back home. Pass a small English coin through the window and you receive in return so much change that it seems barely worth while to make a full accounting. The money here, however, is the same as that in use in the republic of Portugal, but it passes in the islands at a premium of twenty-five percent. So five hundred reis (pronounced race) in Portugal becomes six hundred and twenty-five in the Azores. But Portuguese, English and even American money is readily accepted by the natives, all but American paper money. That does not look like money at all, and anxious as they are to get hold of a tourist's purse, they do not set much stock in the little greenbacks that he has tightly folded and hidden away. When I offered our driver an American bill, he would not accept it in payment for his services until he had called a sort of consultation on the sidewalk, in which a dozen or more natives offered their advice. The crowd passed favourably upon it, so he took it, but he went away with a cheated look. He did not seem to think that I had paid him real money. As nearly as I could figure, an English pound, which we consider worth approximately five dollars, is worth five thousand reis in the Azores. Thus when we made arrangements to be taken

to the hot springs and the geysers, it seemed somewhat high when the driver glibly announced that it would cost us ten thousand reis to make the journey. But, after all, things do not cost so much here, and perhaps this currency system is only a survival of that Old World love for exaggeration.

These islands may be the home of the broken-down aristocracy of Portugal, but people here seem to assign less dignity to titles and such things than they do in republics of vastly greater population. Today Michael took us past the farm of a prosperous gentleman who was much beloved by his countrymen. They asked him to become their candidate for the Portuguese parliament, but he declined. Finally they became insistent and called upon him in a body and assured him that he had been promised a title of some sort if he would accept the nomination. Still he declined, and the same people came back with the Lisbon promise to create him a marquis, if he would consent to represent the country in the nation's capital. Finally, in sheer desperation, it seems, he accepted, and went away to Lisbon, after having extracted the promise from every one concerned that whatever he did he would not be "rewarded by a title."



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As we ride about the island of St. Michael every foot of space seems to be under cultivation, and the farmers are constantly trying new crops. Once it was a great grape-growing country and the wine was much in demand for export. I saw it sold in the streets from the sheep carts for five cents a quart. I tasted it and found it to be fruity stuff, not unlike the California claret which sells at home for about ten times that price.

Blight struck the grapevines in the Azores several years ago, so the farmers rather abandoned their vineyards. But they did not allow the soil to remain idle. They planted all sorts of tropical fruits, and now they have brought two expert tea growers from China, who have produced a product that has been much praised in Portugal and is largely consumed in the islands.

The vegetation here continues to surprise us, as we drive about, but inquiry proves that Michael, our guide, is wrong. He says that everything we see growing was here when the islands were discovered. It is the most favoured land on earth, he says, although he admits that he has never traveled further than twenty-five miles, the length of the island on which he lives. It is quite likely, however, that most of the

shrubs and trees, as well as most of the flowers, came to the Azores originally in the baggage of the settlers, who made experiments. Many things, however, were perhaps as native here as elsewhere. Perhaps the salt waves of the ocean brought the cocoanuts here, for it has been proved that these will sprout, after they have drifted about for years and finally become imbedded in the sand on the shores. Then, after a while, the time comes when the coast is fringed with these stately plumes. The scientists have repeatedly proved that a bird wading about in a marsh may carry enough seeds upon the dirt that clings to its feet to start many species.

And in all the long voyage across the Atlantic, the birds deserted our ship only a few hours. They drift a thousand miles to sea from all directions, and perhaps venture across, in some of their long flights. But, outside of these birds, the islands have a small fauna. These islands were named for the "hawks" on the shore, the Canaries were named for the wild dogs that the early explorers found there in large numbers—perhaps the descendants of canines left by earlier voyagers. There are small things like lizards, and in some of the remoter hills, a variety of mountain sheep has been found, but who can say that these have not

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descended from our domestic animals, after having been left in this paradise-wilderness to shift for themselves?

After hearing Michael's sneering remarks about the bunches of herbs over the cottage doors, that drive the evil spirits away, I was interested to find out some of the other superstitions of the natives. It isn't unreasonable to believe that such childish and ignorant people should have their own explanations of the spouting springs and smoking demons lurking under these islands and something must be done to propitiate them. Perhaps their strong religious faith does much for the peasants, but it does not entirely dispel their dread of the "evil power." The church is the center of their social life. There are few entertainments but the fiestas, arranged on saints' days, when little entertainments are provided on the hillsides, little games played and little dramatic performances given, after the sacred relics have been paraded through the streets of the city. Michael assured us that he is not at all superstitious, but he knew that the blood of a black hen mixed with pumpkin made a cure for many bodily ills. Not all diseases may be cured by the hot springs, he said. When the moonlight falls on a baby, it is a very good plan to have a

sharp knife and cut the rays as they strike the child's flesh, else it may mean disaster in later life, and his mother had told him that after six male children had been born in succession, the seventh child was sure to be a strange creature. It would be a better thing if there should be no seventh child, for it is likely to take on the form of the first animal it sees and it will take much doctoring to effect a cure.

All of the people who come here from America, even, are not "nice." Some of them have crossed eyes, and when they enter a store to purchase postcards, on which they pause to write "nice place, wish you were here," some member of the household is likely to daub mustard on the door to counteract the evil influence. And never sleep while a funeral procession is passing your door; if you do, you will be the next one to take the long, sad ride to the "city of evergreens."

Michael says that rents, like the price of oranges, used to be very low in St. Michael's island. A long time ago some of the Portuguese gentlemen and ladies, who did not find it convenient to stay at home, for political and other reasons, merely transferred their goods and chattels to the Azores, and here they lived in semi-regal style, as did the Spanish grandees

who came early to the possessions in the New World. But they died, and their descendants have drifted back to the mother country, but they left their beautiful residences, gardens and farms behind them. Thus most of the tourists who come here and take a drive, promise themselves that some time they will come back and remain a long time; some of them even hope to miss the ship and take a later one for their destination.

Down until recently, during the last "boom" that has come to the Azores, beautiful villas, surrounded by flowering and fruit gardens, have been leased for from one hundred dollars to two hundred dollars a year. Servants cost but two dollars to three dollars a month, including their food, which consists chiefly of black bread and cabbage soup. In fact, one American reports that he took a beautiful place, kept three servants and supported himself, wife and daughter at a cost of about one dollar and ninety cents a day.

There are nine islands in the Azores group, and St. Michael's is the most important. Ponta Delgada is the capital and chief city, the residence of the governor and the social center. It seems that a man instinctively drifts toward a center of population, and, when there is but one

city, it means more to him than London means to England, or New York to the United States. Ponta Delgada sets the fashions. It is to the Azores almost what Mecca is to the Mohammedan.

After we had reached the steamer, and had the leisure to take some mental account of this busy excursion of a day into one of the neglected beauty spots on the earth's surface—it may have been association of ideas, for our compelling thought during these days is of Egypt—we could think of the Azores only as one of the flowery mile-posts on our way to Alexandria. Doubtless this thought never occurs to the passenger bound for Gibraltar or any of the various Mediterranean ports, that mark the commencement of a continental jaunt. But the voyager to Europe cannot have such dreams and anticipations as the one who knows that the bow of his ship is pointed toward the Nile delta. Europe has its monuments mossy with age, but the land of our thoughts makes the oldest monument of Europe seem to be of yesterday's labour. And we would gradually draw near to her gates, loitering by the wayside, stopping amid strange fields of flowers, the like of which we have never before seen. And we had not ceased rehearsing the pleasant experiences in the Azores, before

we were told that there would be another day's halt in our billowy progress toward the east.

Two mornings later we were awakened by a great clatter beside the portholes, and, looking out, we saw boys shouting and blowing trumpets made of ox horns. We needed no further reminder of the fact that we had silently crept up into what corresponds to a harbour hereabouts, and that we were anchored beneath the towering panorama of Funchal, which is only one of the group, but is, nevertheless, what is popularly known as the Madeira islands.

The boys were there in boats, waiting to dive for coins, and they were wildly calling their challenges to one another and to the passengers who one by one crept upon deck to have a first peep at the landscape. But these boys seemed to be the aristocracy of their kind at island ports. A few pennies were thrown overboard and the boys sneered. These coins would have made glad the hearts of the divers that come out to meet ships at many ports, but here, while they spoke little English, they knew the meaning of the word "shilling" and they knew "ten cents," and when one spendthrift American ventured to throw a five-cent piece overboard, one yelled "too much" and the others laughed and yelled at his sarcasm. The boys let us know when we

arrived and there was no more sleep even for those who wanted it. Portuguese are notoriously a noisy people and those in the island possessions are no exceptions. They seem to have so much to talk about, they become so excited, even as they sit chattering over a glass of wine or as they puff cigarettes, that one at first suspects another revolution has broken out.

In the distance, beyond a glassy sea, lay the mountain at the top of which we were to have breakfast. It appeared to be a hard climb, but we had been warned of the primitive vehicles that would assist us, so we really had no misgivings. The Madeiras have been well exploited, unlike their sisters, the Azores. We knew there was a sledge drawn by oxen that would take us part way, and we knew there was a funicular railway and a toboggan slide. But one who has never traveled to any of these islands comes to think that everything has been exaggerated by report and description. The tourist agencies have been busy, and things are usually on a small scale, and only seem to be grand and large on account of the vastness of the great expanse of ocean and the isolation of these little specks of land. But the Madeiras have not been overestimated by enthusiastic travelers. Funchal is more cosmopolitan than Ponta Delgada. The



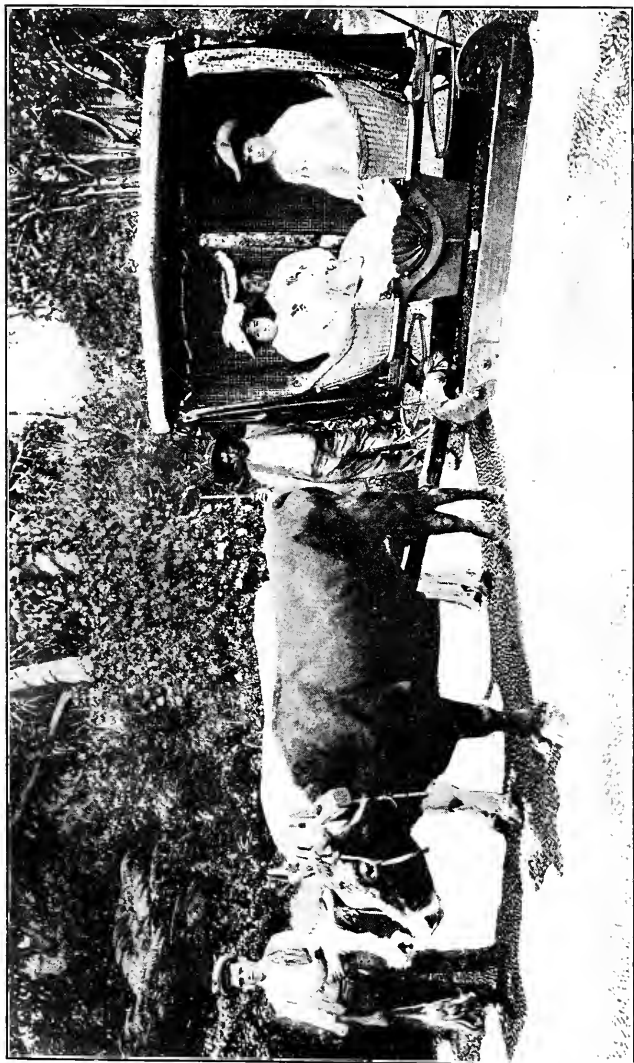
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slopes of its great hill are covered with beautiful villas and terraced gardens. There are splendid hotels, crowded with English, Portuguese and Spanish tourists. Funchal has now become a popular playground for western Europe. The Casino operates gambling devices that have about them the atmosphere of Monte Carlo, men peddle lottery tickets in the streets, women and children run about excitedly waving great garlands and bouquets of flowers, calla lilies, roses, maidenhair ferns and daturas, mammoth bouquets as large as a washtub at home.

When we first landed it seemed to be the feast of the flowers, as we passed up the main street and literally passed among bowers of roses. Children pelted us with flowers, and then tagged after us to collect small coins for their labour. But we did not want to see a miniature Lisbon or Paris. The cafés of the little city of Funchal were already setting out their iron tables in the sidewalks. Crowds of natives and hotel dwellers were already taking their places for the European breakfast, which consists of black coffee and rolls.

We would go to the top of the mountain before the tourist trade for the day set in and we would have the exhilarating experience of a slide down the mountain-side through flowering gar-

dens, while the morning dew was yet on their leaves. Suddenly we recalled Michael, our polite robber and guide of Ponta Delgada. Perhaps, after all, we had libeled him by our remarks. He was a pest and a bore, but we wished we had him back with us. At least we saw things while he pointed the way and collected his exorbitant fees. At least he made the day satisfactory as we recalled it at dinner-time. But we were not long in our sorrow, for as if from the shade of the big date palms at our side, a young man who might have been Michael's brother arrived with his oxen and sledge that was gaily festooned with red cretonne. Souvenir postcards had somehow given us the idea that this might have been the primitive vehicle of the islands, but an automobile near the pier had warned us that Funchal is becoming "up to date." The fact remains, however, that the sled drawn by oxen is still practically the only conveyance for a short "drive" around Funchal. The roads are paved with small cobblestones or "hard-heads" about three or four inches long. They are slippery and rather sharp, and the runners of the sleds are frequently greased by letting the vehicle run over a burlap sack through which grease oozes. The driver runs ahead and the oxen make a diligent



CARRO OR OX SLED, MADEIRA.



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effort to keep his pace. So we stepped into the "caros," as it is called here, and we seemed to be received by the driver as his friends, as we went off up the hill into the country, far off from the trippers who were loitering around the Casino waiting for the doors to open and give them the chance to leave their money in Madeira.

The ride up the mountain was not unlike similar rides up mountains in other places. The real thrill was to come when we made the descent. Excepting that we bought a basket of fine custard-apples—soft green things that taste like pear and honey—and, armed with these, we sat back and made our way up through gardens, little patches of ground that are under intense cultivation, through groves of tree ferns that stood twenty feet high, and past little strawberry beds no larger than a rug, but glowing red with ripening fruit. We reached the top of the mountain sooner than "guests" were expected and the bustling Portuguese seemed to be in much of a flurry as they prepared our breakfast. But there was plenty of fresh fruit, eggs and coffee, so soon we stood at the side of the chalet and looked at the two villainous looking creatures who had been selected to steer our basket down to the city. No Dick Deadeye of

comic opera ever had make-up that gave him a more cutthroat appearance. But when we realized again that "what is to be, is to be," we seated ourselves on the cushions and off we started in our three thousand-foot slide to the city.

Everybody knows about the Madeira toboggan. You find it pictured in the old geographies, in atlases and in other books that illustrate the "sights" of the world. But none of these pictures do the thing justice. We had fancied that it might be something like a shoot-the-chutes, a primitive slide, perhaps the original of all slips so familiar to the frequenters of Coney Island and Luna parks. But it is not that at all. The road corkscrews down a slope of three thousand feet of mountain scenery that would be difficult to match elsewhere and not down a precipitous slope. We come in moderate curves and inclines. Sometimes the basket shoots forward at a terrific pace and the first thing you know you are gliding along between garden walls over which great masses of flowers and foliage are peeping. Then the basket almost stops, as the men who are steering it give it a quick jerk with a rope and off it speeds again, past open gates through which you get a peep at the flowers and foliage that

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barely permit a glimpse of chimney pots and cottage roofs, which seemed to be weighed down by the burden. All the roadway is paved with the small stones that have become smooth as ice, due to the greased runners of the baskets passing over them.

Finally we call to the two villains who are pretending to steer the basket and they pause in front of the famous church of Our Lady of the Mount. Here is one of the most famous of all statues of the Virgin in Atlantic islands, and we wanted to see it. But we had forgotten that it is a church fast day, and the statue is draped in purple silk, so that we may not gaze upon the features. The silk will be taken off with great ceremony a little later, and we regret that we shall not be here when the statue is brought down to the city in stately procession. The peasants were circled around it on their knees and their votive offerings, large candles; waxen limbs, arms and heads, were piled around them. On August 15th the statue is carried to the city for the great festival, and supplications are made. In time of famine and plague the virgin is appealed to. She is petitioned to save the crops and to protect the island from all forms of pestilence.

After leaving the church we continued our

ride into the city only pausing on the way to inspect the gorgeous gardens surrounding the villas of the rich. We met with nothing but courtesy when we entered these private gardens, in several cases the owners seeming to take a particular pride in demonstrating what they had accomplished with plants and shrubs not native to the islands. But it seemed too wonderful to be true. The mass of colour made it all artificial—like some wonderful painting of a flowery isle on a theater drop curtain. Soon, however, we realized that it was all true; we had not been dreaming after all. We passed men and oxen drawing heavy loads up the mountain side. It is practical, this slide through a paradise of flowers. In this way provisions are carried up and people go to and from their labours in the city. After all it is real life. The only horse I saw was ridden by an Englishman, who had a boy trotting along beside the bridle, apparently to catch the animal by the head if it stumbled on the slippery pavement. Donkeys seemed to be in disgrace here also and were subjected to the most menial tasks. Madeira is the oxen's paradise, and here they walk about with wreaths of flowers around their necks and with flowers decorating their yokes, which seem to be easier in consequence.



After we arrived safely in the city, we realized that we would have to hunt for him who could compare to Michael of Ponta Delgada, if we were to find him at all. Either they stubbornly refused to do so, or these guides could not speak English. But at last a fellow met us and offered embroideries. "Me, Jules, we spik Anglis," he said, and we immediately engaged him. It is written that he sold no more embroideries that day, for, after all, what we know of Madeira, we seemed to learn from Jules. He could not take us to a store where we could purchase a guide book, for there seems to be no such thing, but we made an arrangement for him to be our guide and we found that is the most satisfactory form of "book" for the speedy traveler. To Jules I am indebted for the following details:

The islands were discovered long before Columbus started out on his first voyage to America, but now that our bows are pointed toward Gibraltar and the older lands, we know that when we once pass that granite gateway we plunge into the ancient world, and such new things as Madeira, discovered in 1419, are quite likely to appear to be very modern. Madeira is six hundred miles from Gibraltar, out from the African coast, and some distance to the

south. It is out of the way for the steamers, but most of them stop here on the way to and from London and Cape Town, as well as to the Mediterranean. There is considerable passenger traffic and passengers are pleased with the itinerary that promises a glimpse of Funchal. Perhaps it is most celebrated in the public mind for its wine, which has contributed to the gout of the world. Madeira used to be the most famous cure known to western Europe for tuberculosis and lung troubles, but victims of the great white plague are now drifting to African deserts and the Alps in Europe, and Madeira has become more of a playground. It has become almost an English possession several times, and now a silent revolution is being carried on by the tourists and winter residents, which is likely to become much more effective than the old-fashioned revolution of guns and bloodshed. The English are making it their own in all but name, because they are occupying the land and are spending the money. And perhaps the people of Madeira would not be sorry if the English flag was flying here over the forts that guard the harbour. But once they were more patriotic. Jules related to us the old story about the queen mother of Portugal who was so anxious to have her daughter, Catherine of Bra-

ganza, married to Charles II that she offered to give the island of Madeira, Bombay and Tangier as her daughter's dowry. But the clerk who made out the document "forgot" to include Madeira, and the island remained Portuguese. There is a tradition here that the clerk was inspired by strongly patriotic motives.

Rain here is very infrequent, Jules tells us—although it is raining late today. In an earlier day the saints were appealed to for rain and when it failed to come, the statues were taken into the streets and publicly flogged, much as the priests of Baal are said to have stamped upon Baal's altars when they did not get what they wanted. The island still declares with pride that Napoleon Bonaparte stopped in the harbour here for provisions when he was on his way to exile at St. Helena. He made many inquiries about the country, and is said to have uttered a few words of praise for its natural beauties. I asked Jules for the "pet" superstition of Madeira and he replied that it was difficult to tell the "pet," because there were so many superstitions. He said that if you find a ball of hair in the stomach of an ox, bake it in a loaf of sour bread, hide it in a holy place, all your wishes will come true in the future. Thus it will be observed that considerable of the

pagan remains in these childish minds, thought to be so deeply religious. Madeira, it seems, has produced no artists and no famous men of any sort. It has no history, excepting that it may have been here that the American slave trade originated. Negroes were brought over from the African coast to work in the cane fields, and the practice was continued among the early settlers in America. The patron saint of the island is St. James the Lesser. Once, when plague was infesting the island—and it is said that cholera has existed here at a later date than the tourist agencies tell us—and the health officer seemed to be powerless, the statue of the saint was brought into the public place, the health officer approached it and said: “Senhor, I have served this city as well as I could. I can do no more. Here, take you the wand of office and be you our health officer.” He threw the wand at the feet of the saint—and the plague was stayed.

In the older days, only Roman Catholics could be buried in the ground of the islands and all Protestants were buried at sea, but this practice has been discontinued, and anybody, irrespective of creed or religion, is entitled to his six feet of earth, if “anything happens.” Hunting expeditions on the outlying and smaller lands of

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the group have shown a few mountain sheep and some rare birds and even a few seals. Seals in the tropics! It seems incongruous, but one becomes accustomed to the incongruous in a land where automobiles run by the side of ox carts and sleds.

Once back on the ship we not only reviewed pleasant excursions of a day, but we realized that we were nearing the great granite gate of Gibraltar. We were about to witness one of the monuments which tourists to Egypt usually class with that bewildering array that awaits them between Cairo and Wadi-Halfa.

Dr. Samuel Johnson said: "The grand object of all travel is to see the Mediterranean." We subscribed to his opinion, but woe to any man who subscribes to the opinion of another in such an argumentative subject as travel. In a sky that we had usually expected to find cloudless, a sea that is popularly supposed to be the colour of sapphire, we suddenly saw nothing but murky gray as dismal as a foggy morning at Sandy Hook. The beautiful Mediterranean seemed to resent our intrusion, and a big black cloud floated over us from Morocco that suddenly veiled everything from view.

Perhaps we were fortunate in having arisen early. A glimpse of Gibraltar was our reward.

The great rock stood out defiantly for a few brief minutes in the morning sunlight and then all turned gray. The rain began to fall and it was not a downpour that might have led one to believe that it would pass in an hour or so. On the contrary, it was one of those miserable rains that drip all day long—and perhaps longer.

“A very unusual thing at Gib, a most unusual thing,” said an English port official who came aboard. But everybody grumbled, and it seemed that some of the passengers were blaming the captain. The Englishman continued to apologize. He regretted so much that every mother’s son and daughter from America could not spend a delightful day at beautiful Gibraltar. Most of the passengers, however, seemed to decide that they would rather stay aboard the ship where it was dry and warm. Perhaps it was chiefly the first-trippers who ventured ashore. But we had no intention of being denied the privilege of setting foot on Gibraltar. No such thing as a misty rain should rob us of an anticipated joy. So we hustled into our raincoats, and went out over the ship’s side, down the ladders into the little craft that was bobbing around in the waves. Verily, we were looking for an experience, and we had one. If this is the beginning of the “grand object of

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travel," as Dr. Johnson had it, if we could believe that the old grouch who sat over his beef-steak pie and ale and growled about everything under the sun, really knew what he was talking about when he defined travel, we would start for our respective homes by the first ship and travel no more. Long before we reached the shore, there were bellowing Spaniards who wanted to sell us the inevitable souvenirs. They were angry because so few people were coming ashore from the ship and they had big cargoes of lace and silk stuff which they vowed they would sell us.

Many tourists have written beautiful impressions of Gibraltar. My impression was that it is anything but beautiful. The paving of the streets was covered with a layer of blue clay mud two inches deep. A few Spaniards peeped at us as we stared up at their balconies, but on this rainy day the city seemed to be peopled by fat, greasy Moors, who were sliding around in the blue mud, and English soldiers who looked as if they had been thrown upon a rock in the middle of the sea and were doing penance for some terrible crime. English soldiers, as a rule, are fine-looking and well-behaved men. They have a dash and swagger as they strut about in sunshine lands and at home, but it

seemed far different here. A Moor went past driving a flock of goats from door to door, where he milked them as the milk was sold to his customers. We were told that he often drove a goat to the third story of the houses for the same purpose, and even the goats were slipping and sliding in the mud. But this driver of goats looked no more dejected than the two English officers we saw going to church. They were making slow headway as they slopped along through the clay—and their gold braid was no help to them in this predicament. And, despite the black cloud that hung around the face of the mountain, we continued to climb. When we reached a point as high as we were permitted to go, we looked back. We wished that the English, noted for colonial improvements, had outfitted Gibraltar with a slide like that we had recently enjoyed at Madeira. But there is no slide at Gibraltar. Our horse stumbled and we held tightly to the handle of the sea. The driver related to us the history of the rock, while we were catching our breath for the next slip. He pointed to statues of brave men but we saw them not. Everything seemed to be rock and wet blue clay.

As we reached the city, the rain ceased its downpour and settled in for what seemed to be



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a lengthy drizzle. We went to church, and the churches seemed to be deserted. We visited the Moorish market where merchants were offering meats and those vegetables which appeal to a Moorish stomach.

Finally, long after we had experienced enough of the joys of the gateway to the Mediterranean, we decided to go back to our ship, which we had reason to believe lay off there somewhere in the bay. As we were steaming back the boatman assured us that the dark line in the distance was Tarifa Island, where the Berber pirates used to exact tribute from passing vessels—thus has come down to us our word “tariff.”

“Over there is Algeciras,” added the boatman, with a swing of his arm.

But Tarifa and pirates appealed to us more. Our feelings were such and our experiences at Gibraltar had been such that we would not have been much surprised if out of the fog had come a troop of pirates with bowie knives in their teeth, demanding what remained in our purses. But even pirates are supposed to wear bright colours—and they would have been a relief from the dull gray and black of our day.

As we reached the ship and climbed aboard we came near enough to some of the officers to realize that we were on the right ship. Other-

wise we could not have told for certain, so dense was the fog; and we were not sorry when we heard the big chains of the anchors being drawn in and we knew that our bows were headed for the city of Alexander the Great, where the wise ones tell us "rain is almost unknown."

## CHAPTER II

### BEYOND THE GATE

**T**HE Mediterranean is one of the most beautiful bodies of water in the world, but it may be also one of the most terrible. One who crosses it where it is narrow from Marseilles to Algiers, for example, expects a troublesome voyage. The boats are small, sometimes they are not arranged with modern conveniences which one usually finds on passenger boats nowadays and has a right to expect, and there is usually so much annoyance that tourists are glad when the voyage is over. But the distance is short. Two days of choppy seas—and land is sighted. It is a far different matter when the voyage is from Gibraltar to Alexandria. Everything begins well and every one is smiling. The ships glide through the gate as if they were sliding along blue glass, and passengers naturally look forward to that fabled cruise on summer seas. But the azure blue of sky and water are a delusion and a snare that lure human beings on today as human beings

were lured on in the past. We did not hear any sirens on the Sorrento cliffs singing songs of love—as the older sailors are reputed to have done. But we pointed out bows eastward and sailed along into we knew not what. No sooner had we passed into the open sea than the waves began to pile over the bow of the big ship. She seemed to plow her way into the big billows that soon came sweeping along the decks. We made a rush to cover and waited. But we waited in vain. We plowed for days in similar seas that would have done credit to the Atlantic on a rampage.

Most of the passengers found their cabins and remained there. Some of them did not venture to the deck again until land was sighted on the Egyptian shore. The wind howled furiously and it was a cold wind, despite the fact that it is the time of year when one has a right to expect a hot wind to be blowing from Africa, and the waters to be fairly calm. Most of the time only three of us ventured into the dining salon and the stewards were kept busy running from cabin to cabin. We dressed as we dress in winter at home. We bundled ulsters and rugs around us as we ventured on deck, because it was raw and bleak.

“Quite unseasonable weather,” remarked the

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usually silent captain, who gathered the three eaters among his passengers around him at table for meals. And at no time during the voyage could he offer any prediction for better weather—and remain a good weather prophet. We might have been off Newfoundland from all we could tell from either sea or sky. When we awakened the second morning, we found the sea was rolling just as high as the night before. The waves were dashing over the ship and flooding the decks. Beautiful Mediterranean! You can be summery and calm and blue, but you can also be an ugly gray monster!

Every one at home had cautioned us that we were venturing here at the wrong season. It was too late in the spring they declared; we would be too warm! But here is another proof that people must go by the calendar and social rule. Almost every one was wearing an overcoat. They said it was “unusual,” but although we plow along toward the south it seems to become colder every morning. Still we wrap ourselves in rugs when we venture to the deck, and ulsters that we had worn in America in January—and then when the deck steward adds a blanket or two, we feel comfortable.

But still greater surprise awaits us as we proceed to the southeast. We are approaching

the country that is arid desert but for the "gift" of a river. Surely the clouds that hang over us cannot mean rain for the desert. Assuredly, we will soon be where it will be warm enough!

For a time it seemed to be a rather risky task to steer our ship through the comparatively narrow channel of the harbour made for his own glory by Alexander the Great, from what had doubtless been a small fishing village, but after we were safely beyond the breakwater and nearing the pier, we could see a mob of shivering natives gaily bedecked in their turbans and flowing robes. At last here was the Orient. It could not remain cold much longer. But we could see plainly that all who had overcoats had put them on. The rabble from the city and the riff-raff that had floated in from the deserts beyond to watch the incoming steamer were draped in rags. They pulled what seemed to be several thicknesses of burlap of the coarser variety about them—in reality these were their blankets—and still they seemed to be cold.

"It has not been so cold in Alexandria for ten years," said a custom official's interpreter, who looked half-frozen as he examined our trunks. But the coolness of the weather did not prevent a close inspection. Never again will we complain about the sometimes rude inspectors in the

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New York Custom House. These Egyptian gentlemen seem to be the most suspicious creatures in the world. Although we had no unnecessary baggage, we were two hours passing from the ship to the free air of heaven. And certainly very little seemed to go "free" under the reign of His Majesty, the Khedive. All seemed to be going well until they discovered that I had a typewriter machine, and then the trouble started. The man who saw it first threw up his hands and shouted words that were evidently Arabic for "I have found something." A fat old man, whom he addressed as "effendi" came out of his private office at the war cry and shouted to me to follow him. I did so blindly and I knew not what was to happen to me, but he sat down to a desk, gave me a chair, and began to jabber and write. He sounded a brass gong and a yellow boy entered. He, it seems, was the interpreter. "Effendi, he want to know what it is the number of the typewriter machine outside."

"Don't know," I replied. Effendi shouted something, and, shortly afterwards, another yellow boy entered with a slip of paper. He had found the number of my typewriter, and effendi talked and wrote another ten minutes.

"Effendi he say give him an English sover-

eign," said the weasel-eyed chap after his chief had spoken.

Perhaps I should have given effendi what he wanted, but I calmly asked why, and effendi did not like my question. Evidently, it hurt his dignity—a little thing like five dollars is not so much.

"He give him back to you when you leave Egypt again," said the boy as I hesitated.

"And supposing I never see the gentleman again—supposing I do not leave Egypt by way of Alexandria?" This question communicated to the gentleman at the desk brought the reply that it was a deposit merely, that I would be given a receipt for my money and that at the presentation of the receipt at the Egyptian border anywhere my precious gold coin would be returned to me. During my visit, the land of the Pharaohs would help me to hang on to my money. We had wasted an hour when the receipt was finally placed in my hand and I thought that I was again a free man—but I did not think rightly. The thoughtful officer discovered a partly used box of tobacco in my trunk and that again threw him into confusion and convulsions. The operation that followed the discovery of the typewriter was repeated in slightly varying fashion, careful survey was



then taken of everything I possessed and I began to think I was a dangerous person. But after I had "deposited" for everything imaginable, I was passed along to another room. Freedom seemed to be in sight—but not too quickly. As we were finally told that we might emerge from the building, an officer came up and felt of us from neck to feet. It was a rather unusual operation it seemed, so I inquired "why?"

"For firearms," replied an English policeman who stood near, so after my pockets had been searched and Egypt seemed satisfied that I was not a "gun toter" I was permitted to go to a carriage, start for the station and begin my "Egyptian Days" in peace.

When the ship pulled up to the quay at Alexandria, we peered into the weird assembly to try to discover our dragoman. We had been promised "the best man in Egypt" who serves in that capacity, a native who has been employed as dragoman for twenty-seven years, one who has "characters" from so many celebrities that it would be a tiresome job to go over the list. Now there are couriers and couriers. Sometimes one unsuspectingly gives himself over to the worst cutthroat in the country because "the gentleman has been indorsed," as

we would say, by press and pulpit. But we had been assured that there was at least one honest dragoman in Egypt. The best tourist agency had said so—so each of us was eager to have a peep at him. Each wanted to draw his own first impression when viewing our companion-to-be at a distance.

On the quay, in the rabble and crowd of porters, we spied a dignified individual who became the "choice" of all. He wore the inevitable tarboosh or fez, around which a long silk scarf was wound into a turban that was poised cockily on one side of his head. His long smock was white as snow, and over his shoulders was draped a coat of peacock blue and gold cloth. He looked as if he might at least be the Shah of Persia, dressed for a gala event. He was a big fellow anyway, and perhaps his size was somewhat augmented by his glittering wardrobe—but for several other reasons he was easily distinguishable from other dragomen.

From promises that had been made to us by letter and cable, we felt sure that this was Josef Fadl, who has conducted private parties up the Nile for nearly thirty years. He looked it. We felt that he was the man who had served Pierpont Morgan, when the latter conducted the excavations at the dwarf pyramid of Maydoom,

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which the Arabs call El Kedab. This was Josef. We felt that we knew him already, so as we were about to come down the gangway to the dock we were not at all surprised when he approached us and introduced himself.

And quickly we felt and knew that we were in good hands. Josef held up his hand and the ragged porters cowered. He said a word to cabmen and they saluted him. Later, we came to realize that Josef seems to be known to all of Egypt. His "characters" had not misrepresented him as the best man of his profession in the land of the Khedive. And it happened that Josef was not unwelcome at the moment. We were emerging from the customs where a typewriter, various cameras, and such things, seemed to have made of us objects of suspicion. Figuratively, we gladly threw ourselves into the arms of Josef and told him we were his to do with as he saw fit until we left African soil. With a dignified bow, Josef accepted the commission, and we were soon upon our way.

"Your dahabiyeh is ready and waiting for you at the river bank. I suggest that you start up the Nile immediately and leave Cairo alone until you come back," he said.

Now, any suggestion from a gentleman of such apparent importance as Josef struck us at

once in the nature of a command and we cheerfully complied—that is, if we were not cheerful about it Josef never knew. All with whom he had dealings, touched their foreheads in a most deferential manner to him. Who were we, then, at the very outset of our journey, to intimate by word or gesture that he did not know what was best for us? But it is true that Cairo is a Mecca for infidels as well as for believers in the True Prophet. We had come a long way over stormy seas to enjoy ourselves in the city of minarets, bazars and towers. Perhaps, away down deep in our hearts, we all wanted a few days and nights in the capital city before we went elsewhere. The crowd that pressed itself around us at Alexandria had only whetted our curiosity. Here was the meeting place of East and West, as unusual, strange, and seemingly impossible as anything that we had expected to see in this world. What then, would be the great city of Cairo, the city of the Citadel and mosques, the city just beyond which lay the Sphinx and the great pyramids! Perhaps we were just a little disappointed; but Josef had spoken. With Oriental politeness he had put his words in the form of a suggestion, but we were later to learn that Josef's suggestions were usually the law; and, as we came to know him

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better, we were only too glad to give ourselves to him entirely. His business was to understand people better than they understood themselves. And, verily, Josef understands his business.

But there was one suggestion that we ventured to make which seemed to lie outside the program as arranged. In Egypt, as elsewhere, it is a good plan for a traveler to assume that he will never pass the same way again. We did not want to make one mistake usually made by the tourist and miss what might be our only opportunity to see Alexandria. The city has been called one of sites instead of sights, but this is not entirely true when it is viewed by the enthusiastic traveler. He must be one wholly without emotion who can enter the harbour of Alexandria without feeling a thrill. It was on these waters that Cleopatra and Anthony sailed in barges and aroused the enthusiasm of the world's poets and artists for centuries to come. The waterfront of this city has been the scene for some of the most remarkable spectacles ever witnessed. Hither came Julius Cæsar, Hadrian, Constantine and Zenobia, queen of Palmyra. Here was the first lighthouse for the benefit of shipping. And, finally, here occurred the first great controversies that split the

Church of Jesus Christ into its various sects and creeds. Next to Antioch it was the most important city of the early Christians. St. Mark came here to preach and teach, and the Copts still show you where he is buried, although it is a well-known fact that his body was taken to Venice in the ninth century.

But Alexandria is very modern and tourists slip by it lightly. One should not forget, however, that the city has a noble record in history. Alexandria was once the center of Greek learning, and there is still a large and a noticeable population, that had its origin across the Mediterranean. But even this city of Alexander the Great is a mushroom growth as compared to other Egyptian cities further up the river, Memphis and Thebes. It is like comparing Oklahoma City to Rome; but a city that was a great metropolis in the time of Christ cannot be considered modern in our usual acceptance of the word. So we decided to wait here until we had seen what there was to see. Alexandria may be "tainted" by its contact with Europe, but it has the colour of the Orient. It is a perfect place for the Westerner to permit the Egyptian sun to commence to stain his features brown, a good place to become acquainted with the atmosphere that one is to inhale during suc-

ceeding weeks. So in this minor detail, Josef was obliged to alter his plans slightly. As we began to go about the city to view the "sites," we looked in vain for the four thousand palaces, four thousand baths and four hundred theaters about which the conquering General Amru boasted in his letter to his master, the Caliph Omar. Where is the magnificent temple of Serapis towering over the city with its platform of one hundred steps? Where is the library that once held the learning of the known world? Where is Hypatia? Gone. They have all gone, and there is no really authentic record of the exact spots of land identified with them.

There are splendid palaces along the canals, but they are modern palaces. We encounter a crowd returning from the horse races. It is a rainbow crowd of silken robes and red tarbooshes. The dandies carry canes and have a very modern swagger. A few fine ladies drive by in their carriages drawn by Arab horses. They are dressed in black and have white veils drawn over their faces after the fashion of Constantinople, to distinguish them from the poorer Egyptians who are veiled in black, with little brass spools set over the bridge of the nose. Eunuchs sit on the boxes of the carriages, and, once or twice, we saw carriages before which

servants called "sais" ran to clear the road. But we also saw veiled ladies in the limousines made in France. Alexandria has become thoroughly imbued with modernity. Alexander built his city to gain a Mediterranean port, and after it had lost its splendour, Mahomet Ali and the English engineers made it into a commercial city to dominate the eastern end of the sea.

The hotel-keeper complains bitterly when we remind him that we are thoroughly enjoying ourselves, despite the fact that this is not the Egypt of temples and tombs, nor yet, the city of cosmopolitan jollity which we know lies a little further inland.

"Alexandria is cursed by close proximity to Cairo," he declared. "The tourists of the world who come here seem to be racing against time to reach Shepheard's terrace. They come to see Egypt, don't they? Why, then, don't they begin by seeing the principal seaport?"

But the question seemed to be answered by that same hotel's porter. One day we told him that we wanted to spend the day among what remained of ancient Alexandria and he laughed as he told us that a couple of hours would be sufficient. After all, old Egypt hereabouts is dead and forgotten. One's diversion must be wandering along with the crowds of the great





POMPEY'S PILLAR, ALEXANDRIA.



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sea-wall, penetrating into curious bazars, sitting for the first time with little groups of natives as they puff narghiles and cigarettes, and drink innumerable cups of black coffee, and observing the strange customs and costumes of a population that has gathered from the ends of Christendom.

Certainly one has never before beheld so much poverty and nakedness. Here are all the pictures of Oriental life that one has beheld from childhood. And the apparent happiness of it! Or at least the majority of the population seem to be coolly indifferent to the kaleidoscope of wretchedness always before them if they venture a few steps beyond the principal streets and boulevards, which teem with the life of many nations.

At least we must see Pompey's Pillar, for we know there is one "sight" that remains as it was in the day of ancient grandeur. It is a pleasant drive to the gateway that guards the "Pillar," which was erected by Diocletian in his own honour, a custom much in vogue among ancient Romans and Egyptians. It is a magnificent monolith nearly a hundred feet high, but it stands in a field of sand and rock, a rather forlorn remnant of what once surrounded it. Nearby are several tombs hewn out of the solid

rock. But they are empty and uninteresting. Alexandria of today thinks more of its palm-bordered boulevards and fine European shops than of a rock tomb or monolith. It seems to be contrary to the spirit of the times. Therefore, the tourists hustle along. Alexandria now boasts some palatial hotels, but their owners and managers complain. The casual tripper does not patronize them. Formerly, the excuse was that hotels in Alexandria did not offer adequate accommodations for the class of travelers who go to Egypt, for notoriously this is a spend-thrift company that seems to delight in paying the excessive rates charged in other cities. But this was merely an excuse. Hotels were built that maintain a service as elegant as one would commonly find in an European city, and although there is a more liberal patronage each season, encouraging the owners in the belief that some day it will all be changed, the incoming tourist inquires eagerly for the next train to Cairo and usually drives directly from the quay to the railway station.

So, one day, we delighted the waiting Josef by telling him that we had sufficiently "steeped" ourselves in the atmosphere of Egypt to dare to begin our dahabiyeh journey, and Josef said we would take the evening train that would bring

us to Cairo about nine o'clock. He strongly argued that we "wait until after the river trip" before stopping at Cairo and we suspected, as we saw him telegraphing arrangements, that he was purposely bringing us into this vision of the Arabian nights at an hour when the temptation to remain would be least. At any rate, we trusted to his wisdom in the matter. Couriers, like stage directors, usually arrange a brilliant climax for their patrons. It is better to allow them a certain latitude. So we found ourselves seated in a reserved compartment, fully a half hour before the time scheduled for the train to leave. One must wait on the East. Nothing can be accomplished in a hurry, not even the checking and weighing of luggage. A boy passed along by the waiting train and, spying Americans, he offered from his little cart what he thought Americans would be most likely to want. He had pint bottles of whisky, also a few books, including "Three Weeks," "The Queen of Bedlam," "The Second Kiss" and "The Diary of a Lost One." Finally, however, a man tooted a horn, the engine screeched its siren-like whistle and we started on our first train-ride in Africa, as comfortable as if we had been on any train in America.

The railway between Alexandria and Cairo is

the first link in that wonderful chain that will some day extend to the Cape of Good Hope. Incidentally, work is progressing on this line as we are not likely to appreciate in America. There are dismal swamp lands in central Africa that are retarding the work, but it is now possible to go over four days north from Cape Town and the line taken by us runs as far south as Khartum in the Sudan. One hopes for the benefit of future tourists in the black continent—so named on account of the colour of the soil—that the rest of the line may be like that upon which we start out. Blindfolded and led into one of the compartments of the car here it would be easy to imagine one's self on the best road in England or America.

At the beginning of the journey in Egypt, however, we realized the benefit of a small tip. A few coins handed out in Africa does a good deal to make the trip easy. You do not only give "boots" or the porter a tip at the end of the journey, but encourage him with about half of his fee at the beginning, and it has a spectacular effect when viewed by the newcomer. Josef had "sugared" the porter on our car, as the baggageman stacked our belongings beside us in the space that might have been taken by eight passengers. And as we were stopping at

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the first few stations we looked into the fezzed and turbaned crowd that peered at us and wondered who would crowd us out of space that did not belong to us. It is true that the road is dusty and that the white sand filters in upon baggage and clothes. But the porter did not purpose to allow dust upon us. Perhaps Josef had given him a shilling, for I saw him salute; but the shilling did not pay for the attention we were receiving. The porter kept entering our compartment and dusting our shoes and clothing and pulling a soft piece of cotton over our luggage. So I made the experiment of dispensing another quarter of a dollar in the cause of cleanliness. It worked like magic, and I decided that I knew something of Egyptian ways. He locked us into our compartment before we reached each crowded station. We were his good friends and he had become our abject slave. Woe to the white-robed Egyptian or veiled lady who attempted to sit with us. We were a party to be catered to—as we learned later, a shilling often pays for much catering in Egypt.

When we reached the environs of Alexandria the sun was approaching the western horizon and threw a splotch of gold over the landscape. The suburbs seemed to be even more modern than the city itself, for there were four or five-

storied apartment houses, only slightly bearing a hint of Oriental architecture; and about the only difference between these and the streets of Italy were the strangely costumed figures with dark faces that peered into the compartment from station platforms or looked down on the train from overhanging balconies. Soon Josef came and announced that dinner was served. Here we were, away off in the Nile Delta, on a train, and we felt considerable curiosity concerning our first dinner in Egypt. But another surprise! We might have been dining on a Pullman in America—only perhaps the dinner was better, and it was much better served by the white-gowned and white-turbaned gentlemen of Nubia than by their brethren at home.

In the Delta we could see solitary figures trudging along, driving home the water buffalo, camels and donkeys from their day's work. Most of the way along the railroad there is a high bank to the north, and on the top of this bank there is a footpath. There, silhouetted in black against the golden sky, passed the Egypt that we knew from pictures and reading. It was the Egypt that had not changed since Christ was born. The men we saw were the fellaheen, those poor and bedraggled sons of the soil who have fallen from a once lofty estate. As the



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golden sky of sunset faded to purple, and the blue Egyptian night became a fixed thing that would last until the dawn, we could see little groups of these men huddled around a brush fire before their huts. The crackling flames showed their whitish head-dress and even their shiny copper-coloured faces, as we had but a passing glance from the car window. We stopped at a rather important station, and, as the crowd gathered around the train, inspecting its occupants, all seemed to be as anxious to see us as we were to see them. We were amused to recall that natural curiosity is about the same everywhere. But perhaps this thought would not have come but for the fact that here we saw a most ill-behaved Egyptian infant. A Moslem mother, closely veiled, was looking at us with wondering eyes. She had her year-old youngster astride her shoulder and she became so absorbed in the "sights" she was witnessing that she paid no attention to the baby, which cared nothing for us, and amused itself by dangling at its mother's long earrings and picking at her head-dress and eyes. If the child had wilfully undertaken to commit a breach of etiquette it could not have done so in more convincing fashion, for when its mother approached close to the car window to have a good look the child caught hold of her

face veil and pulled it off. We saw the face of a Moslem woman who let her curiosity get the better of her. She quickly retired to the darkness after making a desperate but unsuccessful effort to pull the covering for her face back into place. She was, no doubt, deeply chagrined, and probably baby received a spanking, but if the train had not started we would have given the baby a penny for its prank.

Off to the north we could see flaming electric bulbs that rose into the air in curves. We might have been approaching a small Coney Island. We sent for Josef and asked him about them.

“That Heliopolis,” he replied, “that where people go for holiday pleasure—what you call it—Luna Park? It is ver-r beautiful.”

Heliopolis! A name sacred in Egyptian history. It was Asenath, daughter of the high priest of Heliopolis, who was given to Joseph as his wife, after he had interpreted the Pharaoh's dream. The city that was famous in antiquity for its learning. Herodotus conversed with priests here and boasted of the fact, and Plato is said to have spent thirteen years with them to learn some of their doctrines. The temple at Heliopolis was the largest and most richly endowed in all Egypt, next to the temple of Ammon

at Thebes. When Strabo visited Egypt, about 60 B. C., he visited many famous places in the city, although much of it had been destroyed by Cambyeses. But Heliopolis has always been a name to conjure with in Egypt. And now, Heliopolis, exploited by a Belgian company, has festoons of electric lights, whirligigs and roller coasters! It is "ver-r beautiful" place, if we take Josef's word for it, a Luna Park where people go for holiday pleasure!

Much ink has been spilled concerning the floods of water that sweep around Egyptian temples. There have been many tears shed, figuratively, because the English have done much to improve the condition of the poverty-stricken inhabitants of Egypt by assisting them to get water to their parched lands, but in these instances the "taint of civilization," concerning which men like Pierre Loti have wept, has not come about without unquestioned benefits to the people. But most of the writers have neglected to speak of this crude desecration at Heliopolis. It is true that there is a new, as well as the ancient city, but the name has been preserved for both, and one cannot pass lightly over the fact that Heliopolis has become a Luna Park! Now, one would not be surprised to find a toboggan slide down the back of the Sphinx or ele-

vators in the pyramids at Gizeh. But it is dangerous to become too sentimental or pessimistic. One wishes not to fall into the trap that lies in wait for all visitors from the West who come here. Despite the "desecrations" to her ancient landmarks, Egypt is not passing, and Egypt will not pass, as long as the Sphynx keeps watch on the banks of the Nile.

Soon we were in a carriage being driven along noisy streets—soon into the avenues of date-palms, where stately palaces rise above the banks of the Nile, and soon the carriage halted at the top of the hill. Below us, floating on the silvery water, lay our home for many days to come, the dahabiyeh, "Seti." The Sudanese and Nubian boys of the crew were crouching on the bank, singing their desert songs; but the voice of Josef brought them scrambling up the hill to meet us. It was the most picturesque crew that ever sailed from port—unspoiled children of the desert most of them, who had some way drifted down the Nile to escape starvation, and now found themselves in positions of affluence by the grace of the traveling public from America and Europe.

## CHAPTER III

### DAHABIYEH DAYS

THE "Seti" was brightly lighted to welcome us, and, while the boys were depositing our luggage, we made a quick inspection of the spacious deck, upon which we expected to lounge during many days ahead, and its appearance was such that we quickly fell into the habit of lounging, just as if we had been Nile travelers all our lives. Big wicker couches with innumerable cushions, Turkish rugs and fly switchers, books and flowers were scattered about promiscuously. A quick glance at the books proved that they all related to Egypt and the Nile journey; and they had been fairly well selected from the mass of books on the same subject. Turbaned black boys brought us cool drinks, and we sat down quite prepared for whatever might happen. Here, indeed, was *dolce far niente*. Immediately we had settled ourselves, a tall ebony-hued gentleman with a long black mustache made his appearance at the bow of the main deck. He was dressed in a

black robe that hung to his heels—quite a sinister looking figure but for the red Turkish slippers in which his bare feet were enclosed and which protruded beyond his “skirt.” His head was swathed in a big turban that has been an object of curiosity to me in the days that have passed since that time. It is always spotlessly white and he must wind it around at least a dozen times, permitting the long fringed ends to dangle over his ears, and giving him the appearance of having shoved his black face into a huge snowball.

This was our captain, called “reis” on the Nile, and in Arabic pronounced almost as we pronounce “rice.” This was the man who was to guide our little boat up the river, pointing his long, bony, black finger, marking out the treacherous course, which at this season of year is likely to mean almost as much time on sandbars as in the stream, unless, as Josef tells us, the reis knows his river. But it seems to me after many days of sailing along, that there is assuredly such a thing as luck. The Nile is about the colour of coffee—as we learn when we step into it in white porcelain bathtubs—and its sandbars are the same colour. The high prow of a dahabiyeh glides onto one of these bars so gently that you scarcely know it until you are

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stranded high and dry and the crew is called out in full force to pole the craft back into the water for another start. While it would not be sailing on the Nile if one did not go frequently aground, and while the inevitable happened to us many times soon after we had started, I always felt a malicious joy when I felt a slackening of speed, because it meant that the black boys would be called out with their long poles to pull and push until we were free again—because these boys cannot work in unison unless they sing, and they sing sad songs, almost uncanny songs, if one cannot see their smiling ebony faces and their white shining teeth.

Reis Mohammed Abraham Rahdahwee raised his hand at our start and we could hear the chains of our rudder being pulled at by the boys at the wheel, but no command was spoken. The boys still sang, and we started on our journey as unceremoniously as we would sit down to read a book. There was no shouting, although we afterward learned that the reis could shout as well as the best of them. And there was no whistling—no noise of any kind but the singing. It seems that when anything of real consequence happens there, brown and black children are quite unmoved. Our start upstream caused not a sign of emotion; but the slightest discussion

caused them to shout wildly and wave their hands. They gesticulated when wondering whether an oncoming river boat would go to the right or to the left of us. They seemed to become infuriated when they were speculating about the depth of the water ahead. But starting a cruise could not excite them even to words. The reis pulled a large silver tobacco box from his gown, calmly rolled a cigarette and squatted on a high box where he could look out ahead. A black boy brought him a demi-tasse of Turkish coffee, which he slowly sipped. And we were off!

As we were to do so many, many times in days to come, we went directly across the river and quietly stole along beside the brown mud bank. We did not know it at the time, or we might have been tempted to spend the night in Cairo, but we were not destined to go far. The principal thing was to have us aboard early in the morning. Nile boats tie up to the bank when the skies suddenly turn to daffodil and throw their strange light over the landscape. Shortly after four o'clock in the morning, the reis is squatting on his box, puffing cigarettes, the boys are at the wheel and the dahabiyeh is drifting along.

When we arrived, two black boys were ar-



ranging the flowers on the deck. There were roses and daisies—and the boys spent at least half an hour at this task, not only because they are naturally slow and deliberate about everything, but because they seem to be crudely sentimental and natural—and they love colours and combinations of colours. They would place the flowers in big earthen vases and then stand back and look at their handiwork, as an architect might view his finished skyscraper.

In the stillness of the night, the black finger of the reis pointed to a high stone wall beyond which a large grove of date palms lifted their fronds high into the air and showed by slight noddings that there was a breeze stirring. Down near the water we could not feel it, and for the first time in many days and nights, we were comfortably warm. Two or three boys sprang from the bow of the boat to the mud that separated the water from the wall. They drove a stake with large white mallets, and ordinarily there would be nothing particularly fascinating about the driving of a stake. But these boys made even this operation interesting. They continued to croon their weird chant to Allah. They asked him to make stake-driving easy, and their mallets were swung so that the blows sounded like a woodeny tom-tom—a fitting ac-

companionment for the song. Often in days that have passed, I have been awakened at four o'clock in the morning by these songs near my window. Doubtless they have had their instructions from the reis and they faintly lisp the song when the eastern sky is just beginning to show faint traces of light; but no reis would deprive them of the privilege of singing altogether. For many generations they have sung as they worked, and they cannot work unless they sing.

We all sleep behind white mosquito net that hangs from the ceiling. As I hear this gentle song in the morning and look through the white veil that separates me from them, there seems to be a misty unreality to it all, which is heightened by the music and the slowly moving black figures at the river's brink.

Reports differ. The first morning when we sat on deck and were occupied with such sights as the distant pyramids at Gizeh, and other groups of pyramids that scatter themselves along the Nile for over forty miles on the west bank—because the ancients wanted to be buried near the setting sun—while we were enjoying our first glimpse of the Arabian and Libyan deserts that stretch far away on both sides, while the sun was painting it with all the hues

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of the rainbow, while hilltops seemed to be purple and pink and the big pyramid of Cheops seemed to loom as a big chunk of loaf-sugar—we made our first reports of the night on a Nile dahabiyeh.

One declared that he slept “like a log” in the cool breeze that arose after we retired and swept down the river all night. But I frankly confessed that I did not. I might have nodded, through sheer fatigue, for the day had been a lively one—but Josef finished sleep for me that first night when he told me that the dahabiyeh was moored within three yards of the traditional spot where the daughter of the Pharaoh found Moses in the bulrushes, floating in his little ark and waiting to be rescued, to become the leader of his people. I spent the rest of the night watching the palms wave in what is still called Pharaoh’s Garden and making my own mental picture of what happened “just outside my window” thousands of years ago. It dawned on me that first night that we were not merely floating up a river. We were sailing back into the past six thousand years and the dimmest past seemed to be beckoning toward us in greeting. I recalled Villiers de Lisle Adam’s “Say, dear friend, wouldst thou go to a land where pass the caravans beneath the shadow of

the palm tree of the Oasis; where even in mid-winter all is in flower as in springtime elsewhere?"

We had reached that land, the land of the "High Gate"—the land of the Pharaohs. The dahabiyeh has been outfitted for only three of us, but it seems that its outfitters have requisitioned upon the entire world in an effort to make us not only comfortable but luxurious. At first it struck us as amusing that we had a crew of twenty-three men, twelve of whom were personal servants. People in these Oriental countries do not believe in doing things by halves. Either you have not the necessities of life—as we know necessities—and you live as the poor of these countries live and likely as not find the latter a hardship, or you imagine that you know the luxury of an Oriental prince. People who live in the better houses in the cities, have troupes of black servants. They sit beside the master's gate. They run before him when he rides horseback or drives. They assist him when he enters or alights from a carriage. White people and the better class yellows and browns, seem to become very helpless in Egypt. It never fails to appeal to my sense of humour to take from the hands of one of these black boys from the desert an ice-cold drink. At

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meals we have frozen puddings, our supply of fruit is kept on ice until it is brought to table—and after we have visited the markets at the smaller villages along the river, it is not displeasing to know that our supply of meat is packed away in ice chests, safe from the ever-ready flies that swarm about Egypt, and safe from the glaring sun that now parches and burns at midday. We have turkeys and apples from Syria, oranges and figs from Damascus, milk in cans from England, butter from Denmark, cheese from France and Holland, dates from Biskra, all sorts of canned fruits from California; and a water supply from most of the famous springs of Europe. We take on fresh supplies of eggs and green stuff where we stop every day. These poor peasants of Egypt, the fellaheen, who dip water from the Nile and spill it over their crops in goatskins, to prevent roasting by the sun, know how to grow rare lettuces, endives and other salad stuff. But we have not tasted Nile water and we are advised not to do so, although the crew drink it, their fathers drank it and their grandfathers. In fact it was once held in very high esteem and was much prized as a drinking water in this part of the world. Fashionable ladies of Constantinople had it sent to their harems, and the

Arabs have a saying that if Mahomet had drunk of it, he would never have left Egypt.

While we are bargaining for salad stuff—even little white radishes, marrow and beets—the boys from the boat run off to the fields and snare whole strings of quails. Every day at lunch we have a dozen of these little birds, already becoming scarce at home—and we have no fear for the extent of the larder. When there are no quails, there are plenty of wild pigeons, and if that supply should ever fail, we might bargain with the keepers of fowls who come to us every day and beseech us to buy their stock, which they often offer for a pittance. These Egyptians are real Oriental traders. Over the smallest trifle I have heard them recite long oaths to Allah that they are losing on transactions, but they assure you that they like to trade with you and are willing to experience the loss—because you will give no more. They love to go to market, and they do so when only a few hundred of them are huddled together in a mud village, where they have lived from infancy. The men who wander into the towns from the deserts far beyond, bringing their stock on camels, wrangle and bargain with the local dealers as if they were conducting grave transactions of state. Sometimes it takes them two or three

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days to dispose of a stock that was brought to market by two camels; and then it takes them another two or three days to purchase from the "resident merchants" what they wish to take home with them! There is no hurrying here. The hills and the mountains that lie beyond the Nile are so old, so full of men and women of thousands of years ago, there are so many monuments of antiquity scattered about, that the dust seems to have penetrated to the very beings of the present. They have but to glance in any direction to realize the futility of all human endeavour.

The Oriental market is about the same everywhere. The big rug or carpet merchant of the cities offers his stock in much the same fashion as the merchant of the mud village offers his lettuce. He squats in front of his stock and smokes and waits. If he have no customers, he does not seem to be disturbed or worried. To-morrow they may come and if not to-morrow, then next week or next year. He seems to be indifferent to all that passes. Ask him the price of anything that he has for sale and likely as not he shrugs his shoulders, as if to say, "I don't know and don't care." If you want what he has to sell, you will linger long and bargain; and if you do not, you will pass along—and he

cares not, or at least he does not appear to care. Evidently, he has something very much more important than you on his mind and does not want to be interrupted. Even in the remotest villages of the East there is a regular market day, and no self-respecting citizen seems to be able to withstand its lure. Women—some of them veiled—squat around in the sun, offering for sale the most absurd articles which nobody would want. But they sit there all day with their eyes partly closed, munching a piece of sour black bread or kernels of unripe wheat. They are merchants on market day and that seems to satisfy them.

The story is told that in a small village a flute player had attracted a considerable crowd in the street. The bell rang for the opening of the market and all the crowd scampered away, leaving the poor musician alone—all but one who stood beside him and watched him to the end. “Thanks for not deserting me when the market-bell rang,” said the player, as he extended his palm for a contribution. “Oh, did it ring? I’m deaf and couldn’t hear it”—said the last one in the audience as he ran away to join the others.

When we tie up to the bank and our boys go out to snare pigeons for the pot I have some

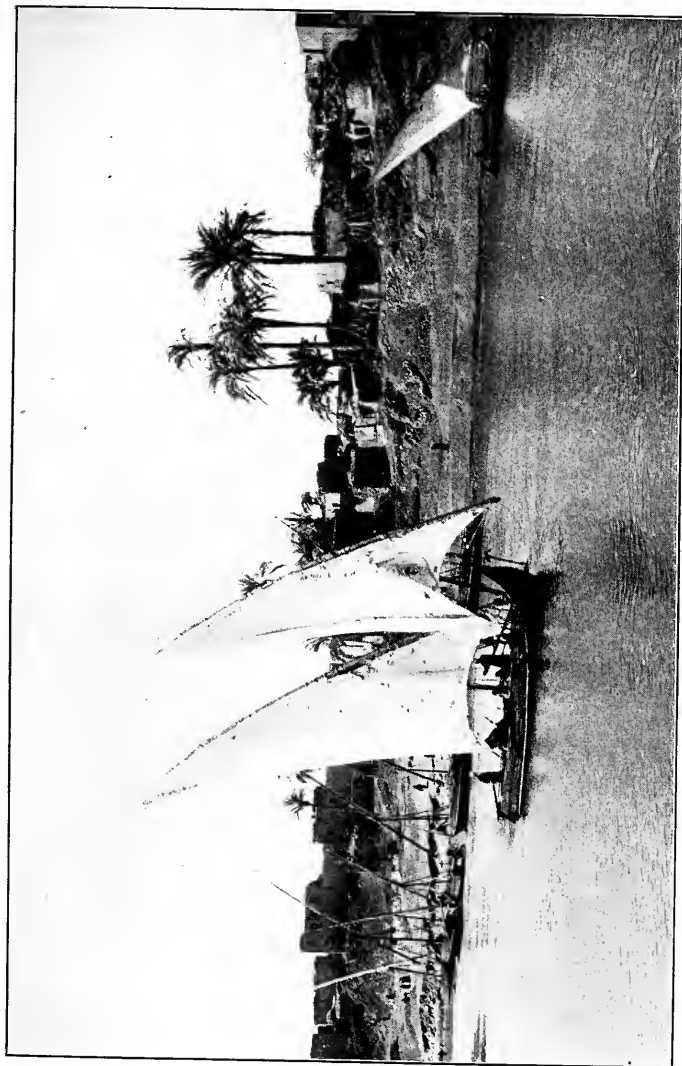


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misgivings and recall what is known in history as the Denshawai affair, which was brought on in this way. Sometimes I wonder if the birds at our table are always the wild birds that haunt the banks of the Nile. The natives, from the earliest times, have regarded their pigeons as one of the precious assets the land affords, and they treat individual flocks with almost superstitious awe, although the birds are semi-domesticated. On the tops of their one-story houses made of Nile mud—just as during the days of the Israelitish oppression in Egypt—the people build little domes of mud that are doubtless fashioned from the dome tombs wherein repose the sheiks of villages. The pigeons swarm into these little turrets and rapidly multiply—about the only thing—excepting poor families—which multiply freely in Egypt. But there are many wild pigeons that are snared or shot by all who care for them. Some years ago two officials either carelessly or intentionally shot pigeons that belonged in a village. The natives arose and a big fight followed. It was a great mix-up that became an international affair—this at Denshawai, and as a result, two natives were executed, some sent to penal servitude for life and others received short prison terms for their part in it.

The English are always given to "impressing" the natives of a country in which they consider themselves the masters—nominal or otherwise. They are always punishing some one who displeases them, or trying to overawe somebody else who does not chance to be of the ruling class. But, at least, the English are good colonizers. It is apparent on every hand that they have helped, and are helping Egypt to help herself. They are saving the grand old land from decay and starvation.

Our first stop at a typical mud village was prompted by a particular desire to come as closely as we could to two wolves and a dozen or so buzzards that were gnawing and picking at a skeleton that lay in the mud near the bank. They paid no attention to us as long as we were on the dahabiyeh, but as we stepped into our "dinky" and the boys began to pole ashore, the wolves suddenly dashed away to the cliffs and the buzzards stepped out of harm's way and watched for our departure. Just around a small curve in the bank we saw women filling their jars with water, and we wanted a picture. Unable to snap the wolves, we were determined to "get something," so we poled along to the village of El Kerimat, where perhaps six hundred people live in their pile of mud, fashioned



TYPICAL MUD VILLAGE ON THE BANK OF THE NILE RIVER.



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into the shape of houses. It is one of those places never visited by tourists, so we made preparations to land and spend a few hours among the fellaheen.

El Kerimat is not a village of much importance, so far as maps of Egypt go. You might not find it even on a large atlas map of the Nile, for it is merely one of the many centers of its sort, where the fellaheen come to sleep at night, after they have toiled in the fields, and which they doubtless call home. It is no larger and no smaller than many similar towns, but it seemed to be "typical" of all of them, so we selected it as a fitting field for observation, showing the old national life of Egypt. The mere name, a mud village, cannot convey much of an impression to the reader. Some of the houses are quite pretentious and have second stories, with mud plastered along the tops in ornamental designs. They have doors made of woven wheat straw or cornstalks and one becomes quite "home-like" when seen from the interior, although the brown paper aspect of one of these villages from the distance, is rather disappointing. All the houses are built either against one another, or they join the courtyard of the neighbour, thus forming a pen into which goats, camels and donkeys may be driven at

night. The floors are hard dirt, and there are many earthenware pots and jars scattered around the single room, which with the addition of a few "pens" into which the children crawl to sleep on woven rush mats, forms the whole interior. Most of the houses we visited had little stoves made of mud, and in one or two of these there was a crackling blaze from dried rushes or brush. The women pulled black shawls over their faces as the sheik of the village took us around and unceremoniously entered any of the houses that we indicated we would like to visit. These people are used to seeing the boats glide by on the river, as they have glided for thousands of years, but they are not used to seeing a boat stop and discharge its passengers among them. Josef tells us that in his twenty-seven years of experience on the Nile he has never known foreign white people to visit El Kerimat—and from what we saw, we are willing to take his word for it.

As the people saw us coming, they ran to the shore. The younger ones were naked, and their elders wore blue or brown shirts, and looked warlike as they came running toward us. But it was merely their natural curiosity, which could have been matched by our own. Even the two men who were leading camels nearby, went

out of their way and hurried to what they calculated would be our landing-place, pounding their camels that they might hurry and not be too late to see the "sights." Shepherds whipped their flocks of goats and came running toward the river brink, and even women, who were filling their water-jars, made a rush toward us, skipping jauntily along over dried clumps of mud, never even putting their hands to their heads to balance the heavy loads that they were carrying. Children screamed as they tagged at their mothers' heels, and most of them displayed giddy tattoo marks about the face, some of them wearing gaudy painted spangles in their ears—the surest sign of fellaheen beauty and attractiveness. But for that matter, the mate of our dahabiyeh has a big blue pigeon tattooed over his right temple, and he seems to be proud of it. Several of the men were spinning—a thing that struck us most unusual of all, for these sons of the desert are not usually working, but these fellows had little hand spinners and were busily wrapping the thread around one as the other dangled below and spun around between their thumbs and middle fingers. They jabbered as loudly as the rest, and became as animated in gestures with their elbows as were the others with their hands, but they kept spin-

ning as they afterwards followed us around the narrow streets of the mud village.

The Nile had seemed a little more brown than usual on account of the many boats that were churning around on the bar a little farther up stream. But this village and its inhabitants seemed to be of the same colour, only relieved by a few date palms, which raised their tall stalks from the dooryards, or from the middle of houses, as the case happened to be.

As we were about to step ashore, an individual, who seemed to be a little more dignified than the rest, stepped down to the edge of the water and shouted something. He was dressed in a long white shirt, over which he held a black mantle, and his head, unlike the others, was incased in a bountiful turban. Josef heard him and answered something back, as our boys were continuing to whip the water with their poles, which were manipulated to the inevitable chant to Allah. The conversation became quite animated, until Josef finally touched his forehead and the dignified individual on the bank did likewise. It showed that whatever their differences had been, they had settled them satisfactorily. This was the sheik, although we did not know it at the time—and it was proper for him to make inquiries.



“He say: ‘those people cannot stay in this village,’ ” said Josef, “and I say ‘they do not want to stay, only make visit,’ so he say ‘all right, come.’ ”

But, when we reached land, we found that we were on one of the islands made by the Nile flood. There was still a channel several yards wide between us and our destination—through which the people had splattered and waded to meet us. The men with camels, boys with goats, women with water-jars, and even a little girl with four geese, had remained on the land side. Some strong boys of twenty years or so, immediately pulled off their shirts, as we hesitated at the channel and volunteered to carry us across. They were hospitable, these people, after all, and when we climbed onto their shoulders, the others quickly waded into the stream to follow.

As we approached the village, which was perched a little higher on the mud bank than it had appeared, we made a strange procession. We walked ahead with Josef, and everybody and everything seemed to be following. The sun was sparkling on the white sand under our feet, but as we looked away to the east, we saw bright colours on the hills of sand. Strange that in a land of such miraculous colours, every-

thing that pertains to the life of the people should be so brown and dull! There were hills that stood out with a coral pinkness and still others that were of wisteria lavender. But it was all desert that lay beyond, as far as we could see—and much further. One might wander on for days until he struck the Red Sea, with only a few oases to relieve the monotony, and to the westward wandering might go on across the width of Africa, with nothing but the blazing sun, the white sand and a few date palms that reach their roots through the pulverized mass to dampness and fertility.

We asked the driver of the camels to pose, and he willingly consented, dropping down upon his knees, as an artistic photographer might want him to do, but, as he did so, he was jabbering in Arabic to Josef, wondering how much he would be paid for his services. Apparently, he had been farther away than the others. He had traded with men.

“He say he earn twenty piastres an hour with his camel,” interpreted Josef.

“Tell him he lies and that we’ll give him five if he lets us take what pictures we like,” we said, and the man retained his kneeling posture. “It is well,” said Josef, “he stay.” We photographed him and others about him, all of

whom wanted a little pay for their services. Finally they all wanted to pose—all but the women. That was a different matter; and, besides, an old man came running toward us, shouting as if he were announcing the crack of doom. Just how he had been outraged, we did not know, but we could see from his gestures that we were the offenders.

“He say that when we land on island over there, we step on his melon vines and he want pay.”

There was the usual discussion about this, and Josef replied to our inquiries: “better give him one piastre (five cents). He say you ruin his crop for year.”

So the Egyptian farmer received five cents of our money for his season’s crop and he touched his forehead to show us that he was satisfied.

We indicated that we would like to pose some of the girls with water-jars against the mud bank. But this met with objection, this time from the sheik himself. “Not the women;” he said, “it would be an outrage.”

Then we approached the sheik and deposited the equivalent of twenty-five cents in his palm. The old fellow chuckled as he struck the coin against his finger-nail to listen to the ring and satisfy himself that it was good money. He

mumbled something, and Josef replied: "he say 'it is well.' " The sheik started the procession around his little village, and no mayor ever showed his municipality with greater pride. As the women fell back on the dirt floors and covered their faces, he apparently apologized, saying that they had never seen Europeans and were frightened at their white faces, but it was very plain that we were his friends. We came to where boys were driving oxen around, threshing grain, and a man was sorting out the chaff with a small wooden fork. A little farther on, a man was plowing a field with a pointed stick, drawn by a lean ox and a donkey as large as a sheep. Still the crowd followed us in and out of narrow alleys, and it grew in numbers as the natives heard the chattering and joined in. I asked one of the spinning men how much he would take for his outfit, thread and all, and he seemed to be flattered. I showed him a shilling and he grabbed it and ran away, apparently afraid that I would change my mind.

As we left El Kerimat, there was the inevitable pleading and begging for money. Perhaps they were not used to foreign visitors, but they seemed to be acquainted with all manner of pleas of the city folk for money. They waded out near to the boat with outstretched

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palms and we threw them a few extra nickels, although Josef asked us not to do so. Guides in Egypt, like philanthropists at home, do not believe in "indiscriminate giving." But laziness flourishes already at El Kerimat and it would be difficult to "encourage" it more. And a nickel might buy a few lentils or a piece of black bread.

Although the reader may suspect the neighbourhood, before we went back to the dahabiyeh we rowed or poled our little boat to a village, the name of which shall remain a secret, chiefly because I believe that if it were printed, the "Cairo representative" of half of the vaudeville lords in America and England would make life less pleasant for a man who is a genuine artist. As it is, he shall remain happy and contented, so far as any publicity that I may give him is concerned. He shall remain where he is among his bronze-skinned friends, where quite likely he occasionally receives a nickel coin, and where he seems to be appreciated—until some one else "discovers" him, or he is seized by wanderlust, which is not likely, and wants to leave his home. At least here was a spot where "his own country"—meaning his own little village—applauded him, and he seemed to be very glad when he heard the shouts of approval and

saw the smiling faces. After a little experience in this part of the world, I am losing what patience I ever had with those critics of Egypt who believe that the "beauty" of the country is departing, because some of the men are earning wages of twenty-five cents a day, by working from dawn until sunset—while they formerly received only a few pennies. But for all that, here is one man who is happier in his present condition. He could earn a big salary in America—a country that he has likely as not never heard of; but with the salary would come a new life, and he is happier here in his simple surroundings.

Generally speaking, this "despoiling" process by contact with European, is not to be condemned, however, because it put a little flesh on bony skeletons. It is better that a thousand men should have a plate of lentils for their supper at the close of day than for them to go supperless that they may be picturesque, "as they were a thousand years ago" for the writers of fine phrases who come this way in the winter time to scribble about "the wonders of Egypt." There is just the chance that it would be better for the artist we found here if he were in the vaudeville theaters of America, astounding the multitudes by his wonder works. But I think

not. A shilling is now a fortune to him, because his knowledge of the world is nothing and his requirements in life are on a par with that knowledge. He has happiness—so why run any chances with a large salary? I asked him how much would tempt him to go away with me for a long, long time across the seas, and he replied the largest amount that he knew, the English gold coin that is worth about five dollars in America. But probably the end of the world to this man was Cairo, which he knew lay off somewhere near the end of the Nile. He knew absolutely of nothing beyond, and as his childish brain began to work and he began to think that I meant what I said and that perhaps I would take him away, he withdrew from what he considered a bargain. Fortunately for me, he wanted to stay where he was, among the people of his own village. He was afraid and distrustful of what lay beyond.

He was in a small mud town in the Libyan desert—or at best, what is just one degree removed from a mud town. Several of the low houses with plastered domes were whitewashed and two or three were pink or green, because a little paint had been mixed with the whitewash. Several male members of the population were rich enough to wear red tarbooshes on their

heads, but not this youngster of about twenty years. His dress consisted of a long white cotton shirt, several folds of the same material being wound about his head into a hooded turban. We did not see him when we first arrived, although it seemed to us that the entire population came out to meet us on our arrival. Here, assuredly, was another of the villages that are not visited by the tourists who "do" Cairo in a week or so and then talk glibly about Egypt. We met with nothing but childlike and trusting friendliness from our hosts, who seemed to want to appear to be so kind to us that we would want to return again. There were plenty of men and boys, as usual, who became self-constituted guides and couriers, mainly no doubt for the pennies that we would hand them when we went away. Josef permitted some of these to lead the way while we walked along single file through the narrow streets, and his voice was never heard, excepting when we wanted an interpreter.

After a while, we came to what corresponds to the public square, which, in this part of the world, seems to be a big inclosure where the men may squat, talk and smoke. It was inclosed by mud walls about five feet high, and when Josef told us to "seat ourselves," so that



our hosts would feel at liberty to squat, a point of etiquette in which all Egyptians who consider themselves hosts are very particular, we did so, and a young magician, the hero of this story, made his appearance. We were to be entertained we were told, but before the artist began to show us what he could do, he asked Josef what we were going to give. Josef asked him how much he wanted and he replied that a half-piastre, about two and one-half cents, would satisfy him. When we had deposited the coin in the sand at his feet, he immediately hopped into the circle made by his audience and the entertainment began—or, as we say at home, the curtain was rung up.

But there was no curtain, there were no accessories, trap doors, mirrors or black backgrounds, so dear to the hearts of the magicians who operate in America. I wondered what some of our celebrated magicians would have done under similar circumstances. The boy “worked” on the sand floor, he stood in the circle, and during his performance, he wore no clothing but a loin-cloth, so it was impossible for him to conceal things. His “kit” was inclosed in a small bag on the ground, and, with these rather crude implements, he gave an exhibition that made the best performance of Kellar

or Hermann seem to be childish and easy. He began with palming, and I have never seen such an exhibition with a pack of cards. You saw the cards that he was holding and named them, but quicker than the eye, he substituted others and you looked in vain through the pack for the ones you had picked. He held single cards before our eyes and they vanished into the air, when he made a peculiar gurgling sound with his throat. He pulled a small rabbit from his bag and we held it by the ears and fondled it to be convinced that it was alive and real; yet he took the rabbit from my hand, rolled it once or twice between his palms, made the same gurgling sound and it disappeared as the cards had done. He placed four pieces of tin about the size of quarter-dollars in my hand and told me to hold them tightly. I did not know what the trick would be, but determined to hang onto my coins. Again the gurgle from his throat, I opened my hand and the coins were gone, and he took two from his own mouth and two from the hand of another auditor, who sat several feet away from me.

The less than three-cent entertainment lasted for fully half an hour, and the boy's tricks seemed to be all as marvelous as the ones I have enumerated—all of them performed with

these crude little things that he had collected. Finally, like all good entertainers, he arrived at his climax. He took a knife which appeared to be fully a half yard in length, and, throwing his head back, he jammed it down his throat to the handle, walking toward us and tapping his stomach with his hand to show us how far it had penetrated. It was a ghastly exhibition, and under the circumstances, I had not the slightest doubt that it was a genuine knife and not the trick affairs which slide into the handle, so often seen in America; nevertheless I told him that I doubted his last trick. He jerked the knife from his throat and handed it to me for inspection, but I told him that did not satisfy me, so he called to a small boy, jabbered a few words in Arabic and the youngster scampered off to a house, quickly returning with four walking sticks, or pieces of cane fully as large as those used by us for walking sticks at home. He ran his hands over them and discarded one, because as he showed us, it was not smooth and had splinters. But he measured off fully a half yard and perhaps more, on the other three, posed for a moment with his head thrown back and then jammed all three of them down his throat to the point he had indicated.

We were convinced. Here was the prince of

sword swallows, and one of the cleverest magicians who ever performed before an audience. We applauded, and he seemed to be delighted, starting to retire; but I asked Josef to call him back, and it was then that I “bargained” with him to go across the seas—something that he did not appear at first to understand any more than he would have understood if I had attempted to argue a point in theology with him. An extra shilling made him happy, and he made a prayer to Allah to give us health, as the procession started again through the winding streets of the village.

## CHAPTER IV

### TYPES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

**W**HEN one first puts in an appearance upon the deck of a dahabiyeh in the morning, every ebony-hued gentleman of the crew, from the reis to the pole boys, touches his head, and then slaps himself over the heart. To the stranger it appears to be a rather clumsy gymnastic exercise, but after awhile we come to recognize it as a sign of Arab politeness, and pay little attention to it. One morning, however, when I reached the deck and expected to settle down on a wicker couch to look at the ever-changing bank of the Nile, there were no "monkeyshines" from the crew. The reis was yelling himself hoarse, and every member of his clan of subordinates, including the bedroom boys and the dining-room "stewards," had long poles which they were pushing into the sand, as they sang the same old petition to the Prophet to assist them in accomplishing what seemed to be a rather doubtful job. The fact was that we were stranded high and dry on a sandbar. At

the time it seemed to be the most hopeless stranding of the entire trip, because the bar extended from shore to shore in a sort of dam, and it was obviously necessary to get the boat over it before we could proceed.

But the other river boats, that had reached the bar the day before, were also stranded. Seeming to have no fear of a little thing like a collision, the reis steered into the center of the bunch and as we had more boys than the others, we made better progress and soon found ourselves in the center of a splashing, yelling and seemingly desperate crowd. Many of the boys jumped overboard and braced themselves against the dahabiyeh in the struggle for freedom. Other boys from other boats were doing the same thing. Apparently they take pride in the speed with which they are able to extricate themselves from what our sailors at home would call a very tight situation. But the result was pandemonium. Even under these circumstances, however, I realized that it was the best opportunity that I had found to observe the fellaheen at close range without being too conspicuous as an observer. Sometimes we had skimmed along close to the banks—and we had visited the villages—but most of these occasions afforded only passing glimpses, even when we

took the time to dicker and bargain with them for photographic poses, so when the reis said that there were two more bars ahead, and that we would be lucky to get over them inside of two hours, I grasped the opportunity of going ashore, on the shoulders of the boys, and wandered around among the men on the banks who were stolidly plodding along at their work, barely looking up even at the excitement in the river.

It is said to be the boast of the fellaheen, at least those who take enough interest in life and the sad lot to which they seem doomed, to boast about anything, that they are descended from the ancient Egyptians—a claim also made by the Copts—and that purer Egyptian blood flows in their veins than in those of the urban peoples who have mixed with other nations. But, in reality, they are a mixed race, Arab and Egyptian, being descended from the Arab tribes that settled in Egypt after the conquest of the country by Amr, commander-in-chief of Omar the Khalifah. When the Arabs decided to cease their nomadic wanderings, they married among the Egyptians and their offspring are said to have “favoured” the people of the adopted country.

Around Cairo and the northern provinces, the

fellaheen have bright yellow skins, but as one ascends the river he observes that the skins of men in the field grow darker, partly due to the climate, but also proving a mixture of blood with the natives, for in upper Egypt and Nubia they are sometimes of dark brown complexion. Most of the men have squinting eye-lids that give them the appearance of deeply sunken eyes, doubtless due to their almost constant exposure to a scorching sun. Many of them are afflicted with eye diseases, caused by dirt, flies and improper care of infants and there is much blindness, but English doctors and foreign missionaries are doing much good among them by systematic educational campaigns that will be more appreciated by the rising generation. But blindness does not seem to be so horrible to these people as to many of the other peoples of the earth. It is related that so many of them squirted the juice of a plant into one eye, making them partially blind, and thus unfit for military service, that a ruler defeated their artifice by organizing a battalion of one-eyed men. Then the people began to chop off one finger, disqualifying them under existing laws, but the same ruler promptly organized another battalion composed entirely of men who lacked one finger. The fellaheen have ever objected to a

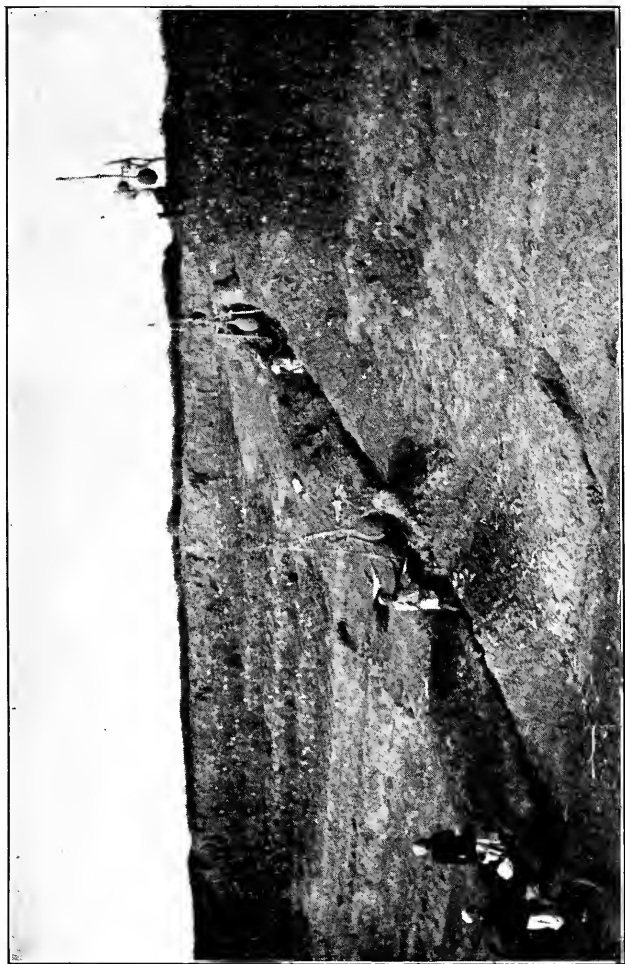


foreign authority. Those who claim pure Egyptian blood for their race, claim that it was the unwillingness to bow to foreign authority that led their ancestors to the eastern deserts centuries ago and that they came back to the Nile country as surely a national type as when they left, and the type has not changed much since the days of Moses, if the ancient inscriptions and statues in stone and wood may be believed.

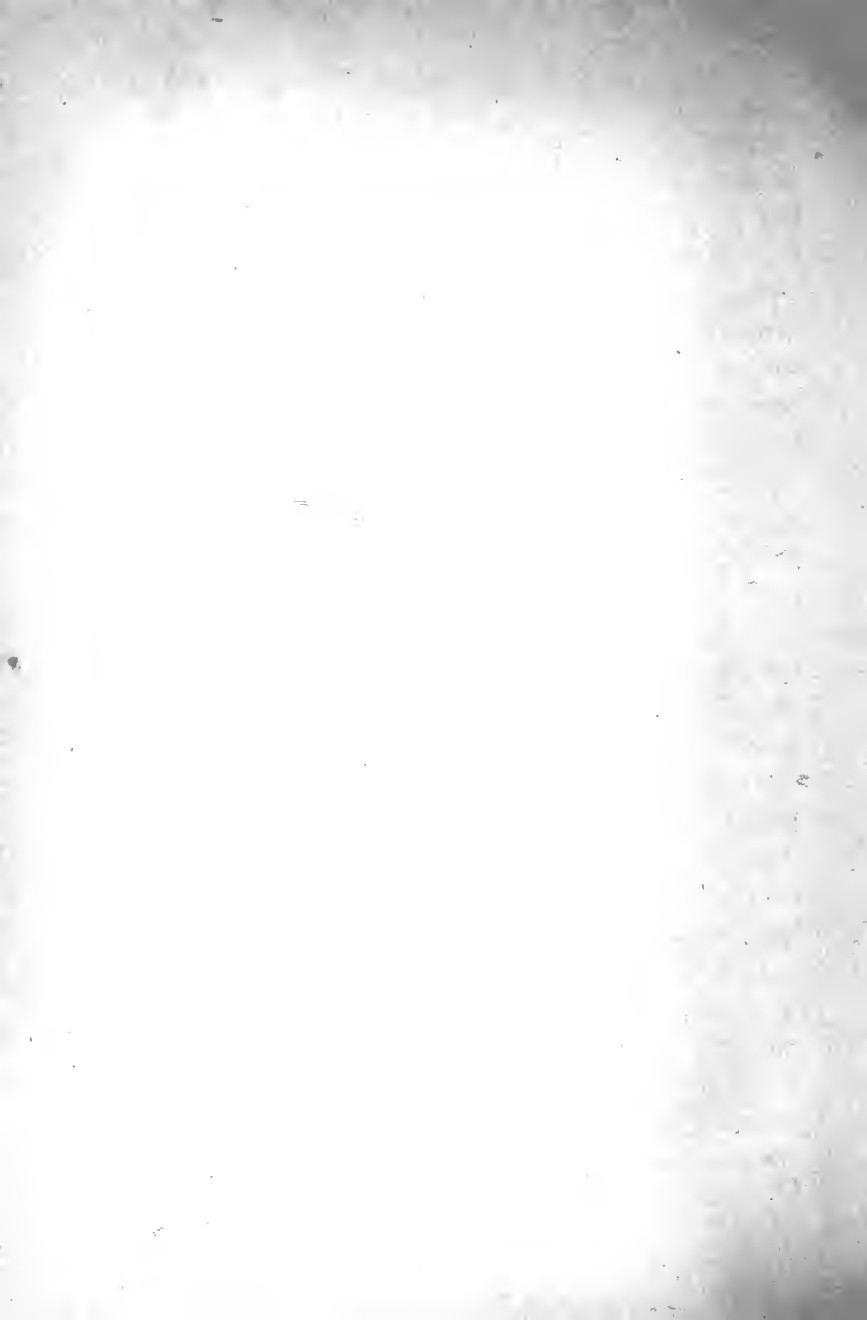
They are still a well-formed people, their principal facial characteristics seeming to be a sloping forehead and rather thick lips, particularly noticeable in the women. They have inspired men like Pierre Loti to rhapsodies in prose, but it seems that at least half of this praise must have sprung from the association of ideas. One cannot merely glance at these people and fail to recall their noble lineage, but they are now perhaps the poorest people of earth, having fallen almost as far as did the angels who came to earth. Their cities were the wonders of the ancient world and their architecture has not been excelled, but to-day they live in squalid huts made of cane and straw and smeared with Nile mud.

Their principal article of food is lentils. How they manage to live at all must be a marvel to those who see them in their homes. But

perhaps they are not as mild, childlike and meek as they seem, for their rugged perseverance and persistence through the ages, in perpetuating their kind at all, shows that they possess a certain resistance and courage that would be difficult to match elsewhere. Once they made the earth tremble with their power, but to-day they stand lifting the shaduf which carries the water to their parched fields, and they are clad in a loin cloth. They seem to be the saddest spectacle among human kind. But still they remain. The Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Turks have conquered them. Their politics and religion have been changed. Their sacred images have been ravaged and broken. Even their daughters have been stolen by the enemy and carried away as wives and slaves. Little by little they have lost hold on the better things of life. But themselves, the conquerors have not changed. They lift the goatskin bucket from the Nile on a long pole balanced by a big ball of mud, and dump the water into a trench at a higher level. Another shaduf and another man, by the same process, lifts it again and still higher, until the top of the bank is reached and a narrow stream flows along over the parched fields of cucumbers, melons and grain. I have seen eight men engaged in raising water in this



A SERIES OF SHADUFS.



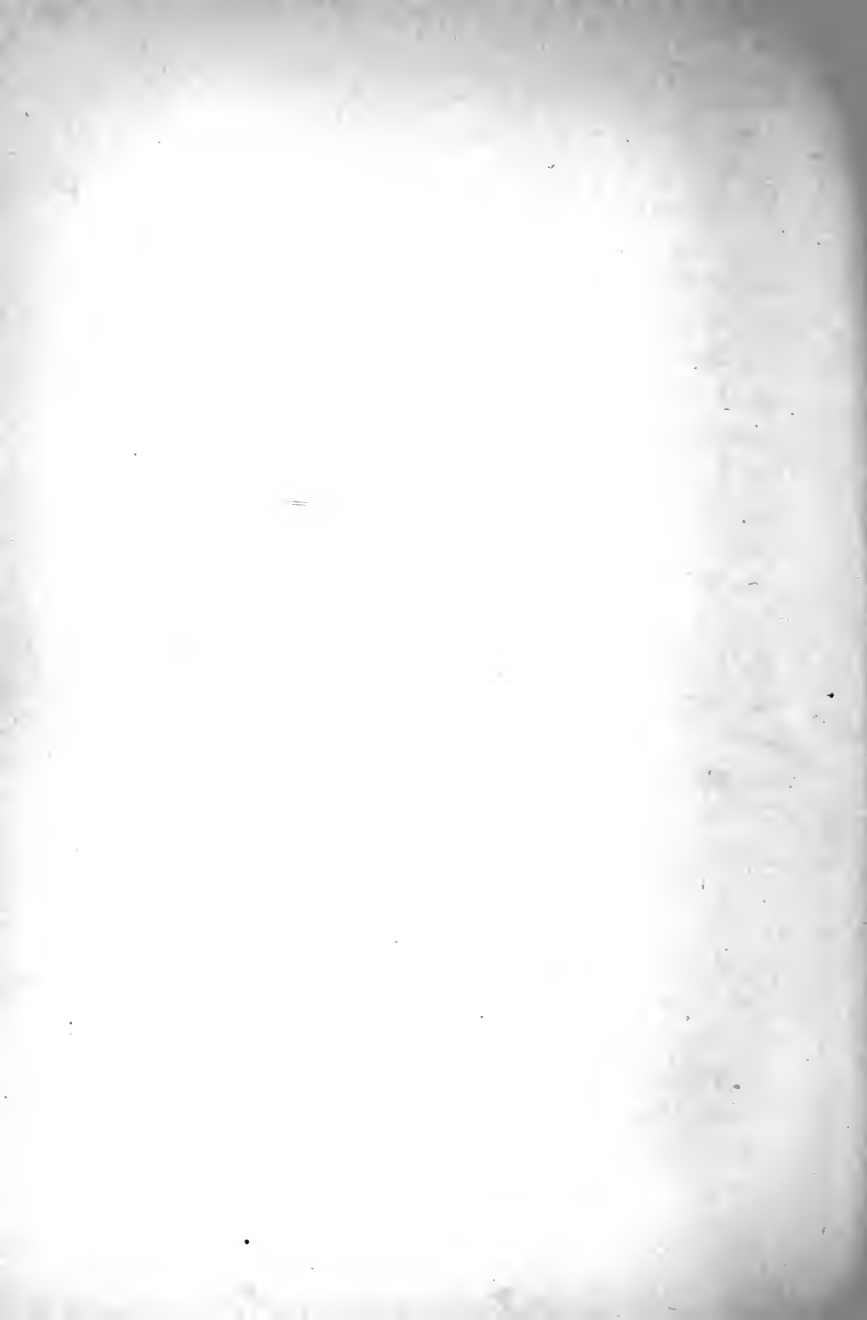
manner at one field. It is a slow and tedious process, necessitating a great amount of labour; but it seems to them to be the only way and they must make the best of it—otherwise they will not have even the lentils and beans which keep life in their bodies. Water was lifted in the same way from the Nile so many years before the birth of Christ that the dawn of the Christian era seems modern by comparison. When the Nile was flooded—as it is for months every year—the men of the shaduf built the pyramids and quarried the stone for the temples, because their king commanded them to do so. When the waters receded and gave them a few square yards of mud, they sowed their crops and continued the fight for life. The process is much the same to-day. When the waters are too high to work the land, their date-palms are taxed extortionately. When the water falls, they must work from dawn until sunset, either carrying the water for a pittance from a landlord, or for their own little fields.

I sat on the bank and watched three men at work with sharp sticks in about four yards of flat mud which had caved in from the higher bank, during the last flood. They had melons growing in the little spot, scarcely big enough for one man to turn around with the handle of

his implements. But they were working desperately, these men; fearing to lose a second of precious moments. Soon the Nile will rise again and their carefully tilled fields will be swept away and they must begin over again. It was a continuation of the struggle that they have endured for centuries. A little further along there was what I was told was a prosperous farmer, for he owned a camel. The creature was going around in a circle, driven by a naked boy, turning an ancient waterwheel, which had goatskin buckets on the rim, which lifted the water from the Nile into a little trough at the top of the bank, whence it flowed over another small field. This method of raising the water is also as old as Moses and probably a good deal older; although strangely enough, the camel, which seems as old as Egypt itself, is never pictured by ancient artists or sculptured in stone. It is the belief of some scientists that the camel was held partially sacred—or at least that it was forbidden by the priests to make lasting representations of it. Other water wheels, called sakiehs in Egypt, were propelled by cows, water buffalo or diminutive donkeys. I saw one that was being turned by two women—perhaps widows, who are unfortunate even among these unfortunates—or perhaps



A SAKIEH.





they were the daughters of the owners of the field.

[The women of the fellaheen have a very dull existence, even when compared to the men or to their Mohammedan sisters in the cities. They are not beautiful women, as has been hinted by travelers who apparently never looked behind their veils. Usually they have broad, oval countenances and their eyes are sometimes black, beautiful and sparkling. But their eyelids are usually daubed with *kohl*, said to be the smokeblack from an aromatic resin or the charred remains of almond shells. Their lips and chins are so covered with indigo tattoo marks, sometimes in fantastic designs to resemble flowers or birds but more frequently in lines that resemble beards or curved mustaches, that often enough pretty young faces resemble the makeup of a clown and natural beauty seems quite hidden by their efforts to be "beautiful" by artificial means.

This extensive use of *kohl* is of ancient origin, as it was in use among ancient Egyptian and Hebrew women. The women of the fellaheen, as well as those of the cities, usually stain their finger-nails and toe-nails and sometimes the fingers and toes to the first joint with *henna* which gives them a brownish-orange colour; and

sometimes the colouring process extends over the palm of the hand and sole of the foot. They like to wear cheap ornaments, brass nose-rings, gaudy necklaces and bracelets of brass or copper wire and beads. But this superficial mark of extravagance is not extravagance even for the fellaheen. And it seems unlikely that they are as happy as they appear to be. They must do much hard work, perhaps more than the men, for while they do not work in the fields to any extent, they must prepare and cook the food for their lords and masters, bring all the water from the river in big earthenware jugs, which they poise gracefully on their heads, make the fuel which is composed of cattle or camel dung and chopped straw, and formerly they were compelled to weave the cloth for the family wardrobe, although this latter is procurable in the bazars so cheap that even the poorest peasant seldom weaves by hand.

Domestic conditions among the fellaheen, however, are not much different than among other Mohammedans, excepting that the people are poorer, and the widow seems to be even a more pathetic figure than elsewhere. All the men appear to be married, and usually several times married, for the Prophet, apparently from a charitable motive, commanded his fol-



EGYPTIAN WOMEN OF THE FELLAHEEN CLASS.



lowers to show "equity" among orphan girls by marrying three or four of them. It seems humorous when one first hears that the girl who has no female relatives is considered the most desirable bride. Girls are usually betrothed when they are seven or eight years old and few of them remain unmarried after they are sixteen years of age.

The curse of the domestic relation does not lie in plural marriage, however, but in the ease with which a divorce is obtained. "Thou art divorced" when spoken by the husband turns his wife from the family roof. Even if the words are spoken in anger, they carry the same legal force. It is possible for a man to divorce his wife twice and receive her back, but after the third "divorce," she must be married and divorced from another man before becoming his legal wife again. It has been claimed by close observers that this abuse of divorce is the principal mental, moral and physical curse of the fellaheen. It is said to have been proved that one man had twenty wives in ten years and that women have had a dozen husbands in the same length of time. The women have no more education than the animals of the field.

Sometimes when a man is speaking of the female members of his household, although it is

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a breach of etiquette to inquire of their health, he speaks of them as he would of his donkeys or camels. They are not encouraged to adopt religion, because they do not count for much in the Mohammedan world. The men do the praying—you can see them all along the river-bank, with their mats or towels spread out, their shoes off and their knees inclined toward Mecca, while the women stay at home and work. The Prophet said: “An hour at the distaff is better for a woman than a year’s worship”—so they do not go to the mosque, even in the larger villages, and they do not pray at home. But they, like their husbands, fathers and brothers, seem to be contented, and sometimes they wear a smile. They know nothing else, therefore perhaps they believe that theirs is the lot of woman-kind.

I saw some of the sturdy boys stop a few moments for their midday meal. They ate black millet cakes and raw vegetables. One chewed on a piece of sugar-cane and a dumpalm nut, both of which would have lacerated the lips and gums of one unused to them. But they smiled and seemed to be tolerably happy.

As I wandered along the river-bank, full of questions for every one who would answer them, and thoroughly absorbed in all that I saw,

they called to me from the "Seti," which had freed herself on beyond the third bar, and as I was carried out to her, we passed among water buffalo taking a noonday siesta in the cool water. They looked like herds of hippopotami, as they lay there partially covered, only keeping the tops of their backs and their snouts out of the water. I saw so much that was ancient about me that I looked around for a lotus flower. But the only lotus that we have seen was graven in a stone four thousand years ago. The lotus has gone with the other glory. The animals did not stir as we passed among them. Like their owners, the fellaheen, they seemed to be only dimly conscious of the fact that they were alive. They wanted to eat and drink and rest. They, too, were crushed beneath the yoke of unrewarded toil. Perhaps they were dreaming of that far-away day when they too were free.

Quite apropos to my little excursion among the fellaheen, where there were so many matrimonial tangles, I had not been on the dahabiyeh an hour when the reis gave me a shock that seemed to be more thrilling than any of the others in this land of so many shocks and surprises.

Now, the reis is not exactly what in America would be called a Don Juan or a heart-breaker

even among Nubian maids, or at least it would not seem possible for him to be. He is a tall, bony young fellow who looks as if he had been shined with stove polish. He always goes barefooted—or he had until today, but I observed that he had poked his bare feet into a bright pair of pointed Turkish slippers. He had wound his head with clean white cloth, and instead of the long black coat that resembles a Mother Hubbard, he wore a short white linen skirt that hung to his knees. So I imagined that something was going to happen, and as during so many strange performances of the past, I watched him carefully. The reis is a very religious man. He seems to be always praying, preparing to pray or just finishing his prayers. When he is not puffing cigarettes or pointing his long bony finger toward the stream to guide the steersman, he is very likely to be kneeling or swinging his arms toward Mecca. Usually he merely goes down to the lower deck, splashes a little Nile water on his face and dangles his feet overboard—for all good Mohammedans must wash before they pray—or if there is no water handy rub sand on their arms and feet and go through the motions of bathing; but there are other ceremonials so complicated that it is difficult for an Occidental mind to grasp them in a



brief thirty days, so some time ago I merely decided to look on and not try to understand. After the sun has set I have seen him open the big box near the wheel, take out spotless white linen and array himself in toggery that made him look like an African bride, before he spread his little rug and fell down upon his knees to declare that Mahomet was the prophet of God and the greatest of the prophets.

On this particular day of which this is a feeble account, and cannot possibly convey an idea of what might be called the pure splendour of his raiment, however, he pointed his big index finger toward the bank and the dahabiyeh went bang into the sand. Four or five of the boys went splashing overboard into the water, dragging a big plank after them and placing it so that he might pass high and dry to terra firma. The reis, with all dignity, stepped ashore. On the bank sat three black women shrouded in long black mantles, which they held over their faces so that only their eyes and foreheads were visible. But they were bright and sparkling eyes that seemed to wander to the deck of the "Seti" as much as to the gentleman who had stepped ashore. The three arose and stood erect as the reis approached them. He did not even touch them by the hand, and, of course,

committed no such indiscretion as to kiss them. He touched his hand to his forehead and then to his heart and bowed, whereupon they began to chatter—all three talking at once. But the meeting was brief. Each girl or woman—I could not guess their ages—handed him a little bundle of clean clothes, which he graciously permitted them to place on his arm. They chattered some more and he began to retreat toward the boat. Soon he was aboard again; he rang a bell three times and the boys poled back into the stream. He leaned out from the box on which he squats all day long, and touched his forehead again, and the three women stood there motionless as we glided away. Several minutes later, after he had ceased to look in that direction, I could see three black forms disappearing in the yellow sand near a mud village, back toward the mountain range. Perhaps it would have been bad luck for the reis to look back—perhaps it would have indicated weakness, for the Mohammedan gentleman should be stolid and unmoved when he is breaking home ties.

And that is what it was. These were not three laundry women who had brought his clean linen to the boat. They were his wives. Three of them! This dignified officer of the Nile receives the equivalent of seventy-five cents a day

for his salary and he supports a liberal household, including three mothers of his children. They live up there in the mud village beside the mountain and each wife has her own home! Or, to be more exact, each wife has her own single room of mud plastered over sun-baked bricks, and the "homes" of all three adjoin the same courtyard, which is the family castle. Each built her own home, but perhaps this was not so much of an ordeal, for the man of the house is seldom at home. Like other captains, he has his long season on the river, and only in the dead of summer is he able to reign on his throne. The meeting on the bank of the river occurs about once in thirty days. It is brief and dignified, and the rest of the time the wives have nothing to do for him but prepare his clean laundry, administer to the needs of his drove of children, patch up their houses with new mud bricks, carry a jar of water from the river every day, stew a few lentils, raise a few cucumbers and radishes, which later are eaten tops and all—and wait for the happy summer days to come.

"Well, at least you must admit it that there are no—what you call them?—old maids in Egypt," commented Josef after he had given me a few intimate details into the life of the

reis. "All the old maids come from America. Look what we saw last night." He spat over the rail of the boat to show his disgust. "It was all very terrible."

And this reference to "last night" makes it necessary to tell tales out of school, the story of an "orgy" indulged in by two English spinsters. We had run along the river as far as was safe, on account of the sandbars, although the moon was nearly full and night seems almost as light as day at home. But night shadows make navigation dangerous on the Nile at this season of year, so shortly after sunset all the boatmen begin to watch the bank for a convenient place to anchor for the night. It was a rude thing to do, perhaps—for English notoriously prefer to be alone, and the two spinsters, whose boatmen tell our boys that they have spent four months on the Nile, were no exceptions to the rule. Their dahabiyeh had tied up to the mud bank for the night, and because it was a safe shelter from the current, we anchored beside them. It was too late for them to move up or down, so as we sat on deck we were witnesses of an *al fresco* entertainment which had been arranged for their amusement. Doubtless these ladies had been in Egypt long enough to permit the sunshine to permeate to

the marrow of their bones. One soon comes to love the plaintive music of Egypt and the rhythm of the tom-toms. The whirling dance of the natives seems to be part and parcel of this life, and it is not strange that one comes to admire it as he never could admire dancing and music in the gilded and artificial surroundings of theaters and music halls at home.

About nine o'clock, from a mud village a mile from the river, came a troupe of "theatrical people" specially engaged for the evening by the "old maids" upon whom Josef looks with contempt. Either quite unaware of our presence on the shelter of our own deck or ignoring us altogether, the two ladies, perhaps fifty years of age, took their places on a raised dais on their own deck and the signal was given for the "troupe" to come aboard. The lights from many candles made the picture even more fantastic, and a soft hot wind from the Libyan desert caused a gentle flicker of the flames that shone on white costumes. There were four boys who played the fife and tom-toms and they squatted themselves at the foot of the dais. Dancing girls? Nay and not so! The spinsters had a couple of dancing boys dressed in white lawn garments that resembled ballet skirts. The music started slowly and the boys

approached and bowed to their hostesses, beginning to whirl and gyrate as they did so. The music finally screeched with shrill pipings that smote the evening air and boys danced rapidly with the grace and abandon of desert girls. There were short intervals of rest and then the dancing was renewed, with only the slightest variance upon the same monotonous strains of music. For fully two hours it lasted and the old maids sat primly on their dais and silently watched. Doubtless they had poetic souls, and this to them was the very spirit of Egypt. Finally, after eleven o'clock, one of them clapped her hands. A servant brought Turkish coffee for every one. Good nights were said and there was a jingle of money as the troupe filed off the dahabiyeh singing a song. Soon the lights were extinguished and all became quiet. The English ladies had retired.

“It is disgust,” said Josef, but Josef knows little about American or English ladies and the “freedom” that they enjoy at home or abroad, although he has been a dragoman for thirty years.

## CHAPTER V

### MINIATURE CAIROS

AS the days pass, we more and more appreciate the wisdom of our dragoman. It is better for the stranger to visit the villages, towns and cities of Egypt before he sees Cairo. They are all miniature Cairos. Even the mud village of the fellaheen shows the "influence" of the capital city. At some time or other some one has come to the village from the wonderful city down the river. He has told of the architecture, costumes and customs, and one day, the mud village imitates the city, just as villages imitate the city in other lands. The poor minaret of the mosque in the village may be covered with mud and set on four poles, but it takes on the form of the mosque at Cairo. The market is a miniature of that throbbing and bustling scene in the bazaar. Even the mud-houses seem sometimes to faintly suggest with poles and sun-dried bricks, the magnificent palaces of stone nearer the Delta.

It is preferable to reach the climax of all

things by degrees, and it seems as if Nile sights had been arranged by some wonderful stage director, permitting one to enjoy today only a taste of what he will see tomorrow. First, one of the lesser temples, but after many temples, then those magnificent piles at Luxor, Karnak and Philæ. First, the mud village by the river brink, then a town that still has many mud huts, but a few more permanent buildings, an attractive mosque and a bazar worthy of the name, then a city barely emerged from the importance of a village, but enjoying a post-office, perhaps a few government officials and appropriate residences or official buildings; and, finally, one day, a city that seems to be a metropolis in this desert waste. The appetite is constantly whetted for something better, and although anticipations are realized when the day arrives, other anticipations are created. Each day as we loiter along the river we think of that day when we will be in Cairo; but we are glad that the day will not arrive sooner. We are preparing ourselves for Cairo, just as we want to be prepared by visiting little Cairos which pass by other names.

A place too small and too "uninteresting" for the tourists who travel on luxurious steamers or by rail, and yet a city that claims over



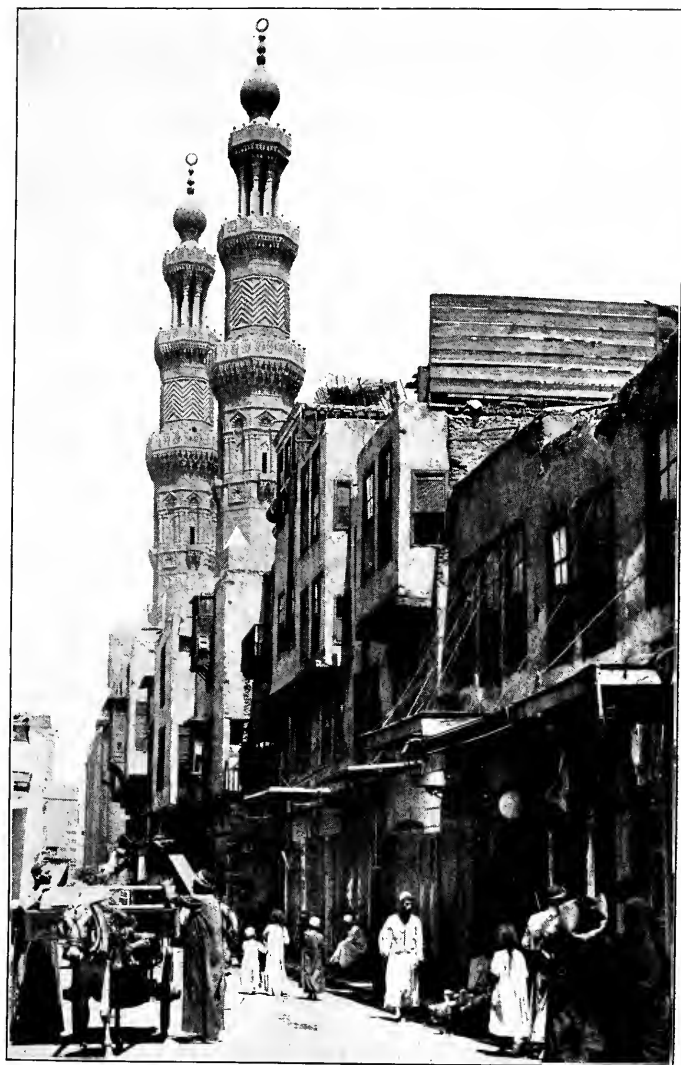
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twenty-five thousand inhabitants, is Minieh. It was the first city of any importance that we visited along the Nile, in our gradual approach toward a metropolis. It was late in the afternoon when we arrived at Minieh and it seemed to be spectacular landing, one of those things that might have been stage-managed by a Belasco for the purpose of arousing the emotions of his audience. But no Belasco was responsible for bringing us to this place that, before the railroad came, was a big center for the caravans that came from the deserts on both sides of the river.

Our landing was much like dozens of other landings at various places. We had the same steep climb up the river-bank, along the path of mud among staring natives, and it was not until later that we realized what the reis had done—perhaps for his own convenience, for he prays five times a day, preferably in a mosque. The reis had brought us to the base of an old mosque—one of the oldest that we have yet seen—and as we started to leave the boat the muezzin came out on his lofty balcony, calling the faithful to prayers. This caused us to hesitate for a few moments, as the reis and several of his men scampered up the hill to the sanctuary, and as we looked around we saw that we were to

spend the night amid most unusual surroundings. Everything about us fairly creaked with antiquity—everything was glowingly Oriental and unspoiled by Western invaders in the form of tourists. We had almost a mind to return to the deck of the boat and take in the scenes as they presented themselves at our leisure. But we had started, and knowing that our dahabiyeh was tied up for the night, we decided to walk along into town.

Josef had selected exactly the sort of place we wanted to visit. The streets seemed to be crowded as they would be at home for a circus parade, but out of the crowd of strange-looking men, donkeys, camels and what-not we soon became objects of curiosity. Lead a herd of elephants through the crowded streets of an American city and they will attract no more attention than we did as we tagged along behind Josef, with cameras ready to snap anything of special interest. First of all we wanted to go to the post-office, for we had letters that had been ready for mailing for many days—so, of course, we were led through the big native bazar. These Orientals do like to strut through the narrow streets overhung with striped cloth, where men squat before their little booths and shout at all who pass. In this matter Josef



STREET SCENE, MINIEH.



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was no exception; no Oriental ever loved it better than he. As the merchants yell out their goods and the price that they do not expect to receive, if they make any sales, Josef struts along ahead of us and shakes his fist at them, shouting "thief, robber—your goods are not worth a tenth of the price." All of which strikes us as rather ridiculous when he expects to make no purchases. Perhaps it is the same old Oriental love of haggling, talking incessantly and bargaining, perhaps—and this surmise is probably nearer the truth—Josef feels his position.

He is popularly known as "the best dragoman in Egypt." He can lead his tourists through the streets to the merchant that he likes, so he never fails to show them all that he fully appreciates his own superiority. Sometimes we make little purchases just for the sport of looking on. The thing bought may cost ten or fifteen cents, but the merchant will ask seventy-five cents at the beginning, and then Josef tells him that he is a liar when he says that what he offers is worth seventy-five cents, in fact he is a fool to expect fifty cents, and if he were in his sane mind he would not ask more than thirty cents. The merchant replies that the article cost him forty cents. "Cheat!" hisses Josef.

“If you took it for thirty cents I would lose ten cents and I am a poor man. You would not want me to do that?” asks the merchant.

“Fifteen cents,” yells Josef at the end of the talk. “All right,” says the merchant, and he places the article in your hands, after making a fifty percent. profit.

Some of these experiences were repeated at Minieh, but the funniest thing of all was the meeting with the representatives of His Majesty, the Khedive, at the post-office. A somewhat stately stone structure that faces a little plaza, where there are ferns, palms and flowers, is the government building. The plaza was filled with little tables, when we arrived, after the fashion of Cairo and Paris, and people were sitting there chatting, smoking and drinking Turkish coffee. At least, they were sitting until we arrived, and then it seemed that all the crowd arose and suddenly buzzed around us. It is literally true that as we stood on the sidewalk in front of the little grated window at the post-office and attempted to purchase stamps, the native policeman who was attempting to keep back the crowd, lost his patience, rushed over to a cart, grabbed a long-lashed whip and used it menacingly on a few youngsters in the front of the mob, while he held it



GENERAL VIEW, MINIEH.





over the heads of the others in a threatening manner.

Usually when traveling, I have found the post-office the most reliable place at which to obtain change. So at Minieh I handed the postal clerk an English sovereign to pay for the stamps that I desired. He threw up his hands in astonishment and screeched something before he picked up the piece of gold. Other clerks came running and a lively discussion followed. Finally there were five clerks who inspected the money, after which one of them put it on the scales and sneeringly handed it back to me.

“He say it is light weight,” said Josef, “so give him another.” I did so, and it passed a rigid examination, but, instead of finishing the transaction, the difficulties seemed to begin.

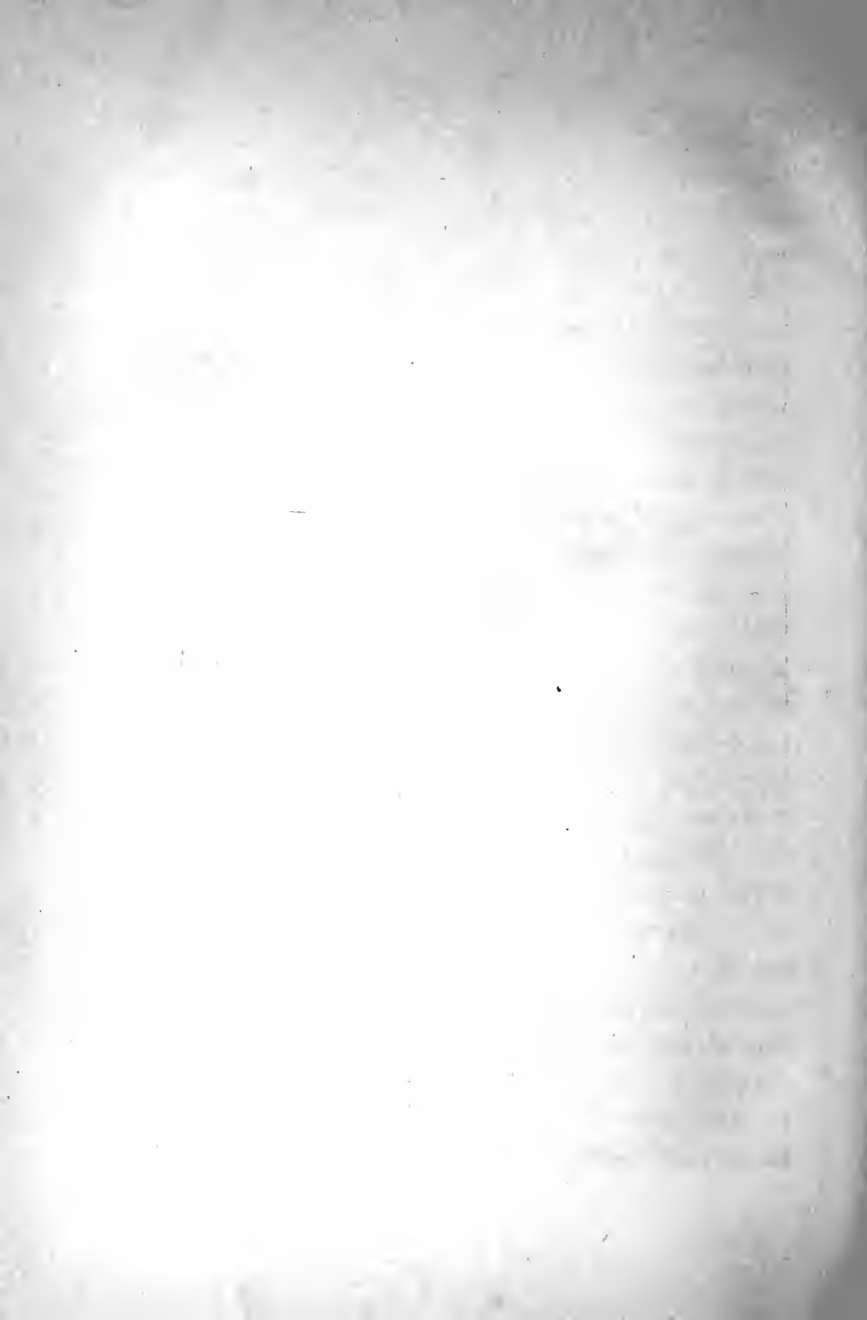
“He say he have not so much change in the post-office,” said Josef. “Give him small change, he say.” But after many days on the river I had exhausted my supply, so a compromise was finally suggested, to which I readily agreed. They had about the equivalent of \$2.50 on hand at the post-office. They gave me that and the remainder of my five dollars in stamps; some of them in such small denominations that I was obliged to stick twenty of them on a letter

bound for America. So I stood back on the walk, plastering the stamps on my letters—across the back and front of the envelope. At my side was a public letter-writer who did little business while the “Americanos” were near him. The venders of perfumed and flavoured waters passed with goatskins over their shoulders. They attracted attention by beating brass cymbals together and seemed to be doing a flourishing business. Their delicacy was a cent a glass. In several of the other villages we had seen them, but these had been common peddlers of Nile water. In Minieh they put orange petals and scented leaves in the water to make it appetizing. Other venders passed selling little plates of ice and syrup. The plates were about the size of the rim of a teacup, so they held about a teaspoonful; but gray-bearded men, swagger youth carrying long white staffs and wearing tarbooshes and all conditions of men, stood with these toys in their hands and sipped from toy spoons as they observed us and commented upon our appearance.

After the post-office episode I told Josef that I wanted a pair of Egyptian slippers, so back we went to the bazar with seemingly half of the city’s population tagging at our heels. The shoe merchant asked fifty cents for the slippers,



AN EGYPTIAN WATER SELLER.



but Josef, seemingly tired for once of haggling with a merchant, merely handed him ten cents, and the man touched his hand to his head and bowed profoundly, showing that he was satisfied. When we reached the river again, the police held back the people at the bank, as they tried to sell necklaces, shawls, scarabs, jewelry and everything that exists for sale in Minieh. But as night fell they all went away and seemed to lose their curiosity.

As we sat on deck, beneath the minaret of the mosque, the skies slowly turned from orange to lilac and purple of night, throwing a strange pink light over the city's buildings. The mimosa trees and date-palms became black, and great white cranes, seemingly knowing that their wings had an appropriate background, circled over our heads, over the deep azure river and over the many white-sailed dahabiyehs that were floating along in the breezeless night, propelled by rowers who were chanting weirdly as they tugged at the oars. Dimly, we could see the black-draped figures of numberless women approach the river's brink, and we know that the splashes in the water were caused by the dropping of their heavy jugs, which they twirl around until they are filled, after which they raise them laboriously to their heads and then

skip up the banks and disappear in the darkness of the night. The sounds of the city ceased and all was quiet—all but the plaintive lay of a piper who must have been somewhere not far off on the bank of the river. It seemed that he was playing the love song of Larbi of Bení-Mora. It was monotonous and drowsy and invoked sleep. In the morning before dawn I heard the boys pulling the stake near my window. I had fallen asleep to native music and now I was awakened by their song. As we started up the river, the clarion call of the muezzin rang out from the minaret. For good Mohammedans it meant that a new day had begun—but for infidel Americans, there were several additional hours of sleep.

On my return from the post-office at Menieh, however, I chatted with old Abou Bakr Hassan Fayed. He came from away back in the desert, and he was not making a holiday of his visit to the little Nile city. With him came a long train of camels laden with palm fiber and dates. He was a good merchant, this grisly old Hassan, and he sat in the bazaar with his life-long friend, whose name also was Hassan, and together they deigned to offer a cup of coffee to those who came to bargain with them. They sat in front of the store on little wicker stools about six

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inches high, puffed cigarettes or a narghile, and they had not the appearance of engaging in such a vulgar pursuit as that of buying and selling. But in a few days Hassan would return to the desert well satisfied with his visit to Menieh. There would be money in his purse, provisions on the backs of his camels, boxes of candy and bolts of gaudy calico for his wives. For Hassan was prodigal in expenditures. I never saw the female members of his household, for they remained behind in their desert camps; but doubtless they were not unlike the women in the tents of other desert men. Probably their arms were encircled by tin, lead and zinc bracelets, from their wrists to their elbows. Hassan "understood" women. He admitted it. He knew how to appeal to their vanity.

"Curse America!" he said to me through an interpreter, as I sat beside him on a dirty little stool puffing my pipe and hoping that tobacco was a disinfectant. But he did not mean exactly what he said, because his crinkled and parched face merely smiled a pleasant reproach that did not indicate anger. What he meant no doubt was "I blame America." I had asked him about the dancing girls of the desert, those bronze-skinned beauties who whirl to the rhythm of music before the tents of the Arab,

after the sun has set and the fires have begun to cast a glow across the sands.

“There are no dancing girls any more,” he said. “America spoiled them. You remember they went to Chicago for the World’s Fair. Some of them remained. Others came back to Cairo and told the other dancing girls of what had happened. Arabs might like to see them; but white men paid real gold. So they went off to America in droves. And they went to Europe. Those who stayed, made their dance vulgar, trying to imitate their sisters who went over-sea. There were white tourists in Cairo. They must see the ‘vulgar’ dance that they had heard about in America. So all of the girls began to dance—not as they had been taught to dance when they were children, but as those girls had danced who went to Chicago. The result? Well, you’ll not find any more desert dancing girls in Egypt. They were spoiled by America.”

And when old Hassan delivered an opinion of this sort, it seemed to be final. The interpreter explained to me that he was “veera reech man”—and wealth clothes one’s words with authority in Egypt. I saw a group of men approach an old fellow and kiss his hand. They were merchants and were transacting business



with him, but when I asked for an explanation in regard to so much deference and salaaming, I received the same reply: "He veera reech man." So Hassan's pronunciamento was discouraging. He advised me to wait until I reached Cairo if I wanted to see the dancers. "Cairo pays them better, and as soon as they hear about it, they go there," he explained. "Most of them have husbands who want the money."

There was just a chance, however, and Hassan told me about the mud village of El Mazata. When Assiout or Cairo wanted new dancers, they usually sent to the handsome young sheik of Mazata; and sometimes he was able to provide them, but often unable to do so. The caravans from the Arabian desert came to the Nile at El Mazata, and sometimes it happened that they brought with them beautiful girls—girls who had not yet heard of Cairo and the World's Fair at Chicago. But Hassan could not offer much hope. The next order that the old black reis on the dahabiyeh received, after we started up the river, however, was to stop at El Mazata, which would be reached the following morning. Hassan said that we might use his name as an introduction to the young sheik. His father had been Hassan's friend, and such an introduction

was not to be ignored. At least, it might hasten matters. Oriental manners do not usually admit of haste in these matters of introduction, so we felt that we had gained one point and eagerly looked forward to the break of day.

It was a daffodil yellow morning when we found ourselves moored to the mud-bank and beheld Mazata, like a splotch of brown paper in the desert. But even this brown became a strange ochre when seen in the mystic light from the east. There were a few palms that waved their dark green plumes over the village, but they were so rank upon the dizzying landscape that they stood out in contrast like the colours on a Venetian blanket. These lights and colours are so unusual and mystifying to the uninitiated that many people claim not to see them at all, but they are here, mysterious and uncanny, to one who looks for them.

We immediately became objects of interest to the people of El Mazata. They came running to the river-bank as soon as they saw us moored to the bank just below their village. Men, women and children lined themselves up and stood staring at us, speculating as to our mission, and, as is the case when there is anything to talk about, gesticulating wildly. The few words that our dragoman caught and trans-

lated for us proved that we were taken for representatives of King George's government. All that we needed were "fezzes" to make us "officials" in the eyes of these Egyptians, and nothing could be more detrimental to such a mission as we were projecting. England has not smiled upon the dancers of Egypt, and the people are suspicious. They do not care to take any chances, for the government has frequently "made examples" of the few unfortunates who have suffered for the "sins" of the many. All of Egypt seems to desire to be a guide, so we readily found two men who acted as our escort to the young sheik.

We found him in perhaps the largest mud-house in the village. The Hotel de Ville was surrounded by a high mud fence, behind which, in the courtyard, were several camels and a cow. We passed the livestock, one of the men pounded on a big door made of Standard Oil cans, flattened into sheets, and immediately we were ushered into the presence of the young man, who sat upon a big red mattress in the corner of the room, smoking his hookah. He looked up surprised, but merely pointed to another faded mattress upon which we were invited to sit. Immediately the young Arab asked a lot of foolish questions. He did not

come to the point and ask who we were, where we came from, or what we wanted—perhaps he did not care. Several desert men—as black as Sudanese, strolled into the room and dropped down on their haunches without ceremony. Perhaps they were his “ministers of state,” or something like that, for they seemed to be persons of importance. The young sheik clapped his hands and a black boy entered, carrying a tray upon which were a dozen little cups filled to the brim with hot Turkish coffee. At a signal from “his honour” we all drank, or pretended to drink. The beverage was too hot for me and I merely held the cup to my lips, but the sheik swallowed his cupful at one gulp, and gave a gentle grunt of satisfaction to show, no doubt, that he was enjoying himself. In my striving to be “Orientally polite” I wondered if I was supposed to grunt also, but I decided to wait until the coffee cooled, and as the young man had the most surprising supply of questions in store, our thoughts soon drifted from the coffee, and the sheik seemed to be so friendly that we almost congratulated ourselves upon the fact that it was about time to “talk business.”

But our dragoman knew better. The sheik knew perfectly well that we had not paid him a

visit in his desert castle for the sole reason of paying him a visit, and as our guides constantly admonished us against making any reference to the real purpose of our call, lest we "spoil everything," we stayed on and on—perhaps an hour—before we dared to make any reference to our "mission." Finally, the guide ventured that his friends, the Americans—who had nothing to do with the English or Egyptian governments—had hoped always, when they were journeying in the desert, that they might come across some genuine dancing girls, those "beautiful creatures" who wile away so many tedious hours for the sons of the desert. The Americans, he told them, had seen many dancers, yes, they had seen the dancers of all nations. But they felt that certainly the most beautiful of all would be the desert girls with the long rings in their ears, the *kohl* under their eyes, red finger-nails and graceful gestures and posturings. Trust to the guide to weave a rhetorical rhapsody around such a subject! The sheik shouted something and smiled. "He say you are veer fortunate," interpreted the guide. "Last night two girls came in a caravan from the south and they are still in the village. All the other dancers are old—twenty-one or twenty-two years old—he says, but the two are

beautiful young ladies—and they are young.”

“And these girls will dance for us?” I inquired, unable to curb my curiosity any longer.

“He says, yes, they will,” replied the dragoman, as the sheik shouted something to a couple of black boys who disappeared through the open door and “his honour” again drank a cup of coffee and grunted his satisfaction. He told the servant to offer us another cup, and we were so delighted with the prospect that we drank the seemingly red-hot stuff as if it had been iced-lemonade and assured him that it was wonderful coffee. At least half of the difficulties seemed to have been overcome, for the proud young sheik had voluntarily told us of the girls, and he seemed to be friendly. Our dragoman told us in an undertone that the sheik had sent for the girls to be brought to his mud palace. We even thought that after another hour’s delay the guide might venture the news that the Americans wanted to photograph the girls, while they were dancing. We knew it would be useless to attempt to explain anything about motion pictures, but we thought that “his honour” would understand the workings of the camera. All of these people, however, hold cameras in deathly horror, and believe it to be

an instrument of the devil. I have seen young men and women weep piteously when their elders made them pose, and I have seen brave men of the desert take to their heels when asked to stand in front of the picture machine.

But the guides paved the way, by suggesting that we make the sheik a pretty little present of about fifty cents—which we did, and it was worth the price to observe the smile of satisfaction that spread over the young nabob's face. Here were callers worth entertaining, they were very rich, and they must be royally entertained. Verily, it seemed that if at the moment we had asked the young sheik for a couple of favourite wives, he would have opened negotiations. But trouble started when the servants returned to their master. Three or four old women, smoking home-made stogies, followed as far as the doorway, and it was plain to be seen that they were raising vigorous objections to the sheik's plan. It seemed to us that in Arabic he told them curtly to "go away back and sit down," for he shouted at them and waved his hands, but they declined to do as he told them and continued to jabber.

"Those girls, they are afraid that you are from the government," said our interpreter, after he had caught enough of the conversation

to know the cause of the delay, "but the sheik he tell them no and send word for them to come here." Then we talked and talked, or, that is, the sheik's questions were answered, for he inquired about everything under the sun. Perhaps it was an hour later. By rare diplomacy, unknown to Occidentals, the guide and interpreter had won the sheik over to our side. We would go and get the girls ourselves, for they declined to come to us, even after the ruler of the village had sent word for them to do so. The sheik remarked that if we desired he would bring the girls to us himself. It was rather embarrassing and he did not purpose to tolerate such insubordination. But we told him that we would accompany him, and so we all emerged from the little doorway, to find the courtyard crowded with people. News travels fast in El Mazata, and while we had been drinking the sheik's coffee some busybody had run from door to door in the village with the news of our arrival. Apparently every one responded. They were all there to observe us, even the man with the brass band on his arm, who announced that he was the village policeman and would act as our protector during our visit. We followed the sheik through the narrow alleys of the mud village to the house of the



dancers, while the sheik entered rather uncere-  
moniously. We could hear the objections,  
probably reiterations of what we had heard,  
that we were government agents. But for once  
we had not long to wait. The sheik came  
through the doorway of the house jerking two  
young damsels by the wrists. They were thor-  
oughly frightened and were trembling. They  
seemed to actually fear that they were to be car-  
ried away to jail. But the sheik cared nothing  
for their appeals and jerked them around  
rudely, while the dragoman finally by gentler  
means succeeded in assuring them that we were  
merely Americans who had heard of their beau-  
tiful dancing, and had traveled thousands of  
miles to see them.

The girls were ten and twelve years of age,  
respectively, and they rather boasted of the fact  
that they were married to the same man. When  
they danced, they said, he usually played the  
fife for them. So husband was brought out and  
introduced. He looked to be a boy of perhaps  
sixteen, and rather blushing—if a brown boy  
can blush—admitted that he was the husband of  
the two wonderful dancers. His fife was sent  
for, also a couple of tom-tom players, and, at  
last, everything seemed to be ready.

It was an event that El Mazata is likely to re-

member for some time to come, for fully two hundred men and women squatted around the palm trees in a sort of "public square" and watched the weird operations of the photographer, who stood turning a crank on a little machine, the meaning of which nobody attempted to understand. The younger wives of the town, that is, those about sixteen years of age, came to a nearby knoll of sand, for the girls consented to dance in the open air, so that all of the townspeople, as well as ourselves, might see them. The sheik gave a signal and everybody squatted as the fife and tom-tom players took their places. We asked him to have the dance performed exactly as it is done at night in the desert, and after giving the order to the girls, he turned to us and remarked, "it is well."

The music, if it may be called music, started. It was wholly unlike any of that make-believe music of the Orient, to which we are accustomed in American exhibitions. It was shrill and had a marked rhythm, but these are about the only marks that could distinguish it as music. It began slowly and dirge-like, as the girls stepped into the ring made by the audience, but gradually increased in tempo, as the girls struck their brass castanets, which were not unlike

those which Spanish dancers strike between their thumbs and fingers as they whirl. They wore pounds of jewelry, which clanked and jingled. I observed that one girl wore a big bronze medal bearing the likeness of Franz Joseph of Austria, while the other's chief ornament was a big plate of brass that sounded like a camel bell when she stirred.

Assuredly, these young ladies had not been "spoiled" by America, and they had not heard of Cairo. Old Hassan of Menieh would have been delighted to know of their tactics—of the "preservation of the dance as it was in the days of the Pharaohs."

At first it all seemed to be very tedious. The girls merely pranced around like young colts, occasionally whirling once or twice and then bowing close to the ground, either forward or backward. But in time it changed. Husband-piper screeched wildly and his tom-tom players began to beat their drums as if the crack of doom were approaching. The girls soon were whirling in a frenzy. Several of the native girls, and some of the old women cigar smokers, who had doubtless been dancers in their day, but now no longer veiled their faces, were no longer able to restrain themselves. They arose from their squatting positions, at

first kept time slowly with their bodies, and then before they were aware of it, they, too, were whirling wildly and apparently doing their best to imitate the desert girls of tenderer years. After a time, it seemed that the entire population had begun to dance, for, although we did not know it beforehand, the Arabs cannot hear the music of the dance and remain unmoved. Verily, as Hassan had said, El Mazata was a village of dancers! It seemed that the dance lasted a half-hour, but then the young sheik raised his hand and shouted. Suddenly the music stopped, and forms that had been whirling were limp upon the sand. The girls were exhausted and looked up panting, seemingly inquiring if their artistic efforts had been satisfactory to the strangers. And at this juncture the bashful young husband of sixteen became less bashful. He immediately sprang forward and the inevitable bargaining began. We had seen the show and now we must reward him handsomely. He was quite a "man of the world," this young fellow, and quite a business man. He demanded almost the equivalent of an American dollar. We teased him for a time on account of the "excessive" charges, but finally placed a dollar and a half in his palm, and he was so delighted that he would have re-

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peated the exhibition if we had asked him to do so.

After the sheik had clapped his hands and the black boy had served coffee again, the funniest event of the morning transpired. Two men riding camels had viewed the crowd in the sun from afar, and knowing that something unusual was happening, they came running toward us as fast as their animals could travel. We waited for them, and, when they arrived, told them that we would take their pictures, if they would pose before the camera. This gave them a fright which a reader will scarcely appreciate, for it is a well-known fact among the Arabs that when a camera clicks before a camel, the animal's soul is killed, and it is likely to die at any moment thereafter. The men screamed as if threatened with death, and pulling out long-thonged lashes, they whipped their camels around and made for the desert again even faster than they had come when all eagerness to view the excitement. The young sheik grinned and continued to chatter of their cowardice and "ignorance" until we departed.

As we reached the river-bank the policeman with the brass ring on his arm, our "protector," whom we had forgotten during our visit, after he had announced that he would look out for us,

approached us and intimated that he would like some little souvenir of our visit. We gave him a shilling for his services and made him completely happy. He had but one more request to make. Would we write him a "character" that he could send to Cairo and perhaps thereby gain a promotion in the service, something that would show that he was always awake to duty? We would, and we did. If the "character" had the opposite effect when it reached the officials of Cairo we are not to blame, because we said that he had done his duty and remained in the background while the desert girls of El Mazata were performing for the American visitors.

## CHAPTER VI

### MUMMIES AND HOLY MEN

SEVERAL years ago, when Amelia Edwards wrote one of the best books written about the Nile and the swarms of people of all ages who have inhabited its banks, she stated it as an actual fact that the time had existed when mummies were so plentiful and laws were so lax, that they had been ground up and shipped out of Egypt as fertilizer. But the laws are different nowadays. Mummies and antiquities of all sorts are carefully collected and shipped down to the museum of Cairo, which naturally contains the finest collection of things Egyptian in the world. It is unlawful to remove anything of the sort from the country, and while tons of spurious stuff "made in Germany" is carted away annually by tourists, it seems to be pretty certain that nothing of value is escaping the eyes of the watchful boys at the Egyptian ports of departure. And, anyway, it seems to the casual observer that the mummy supply of Egypt is about exhausted—

or it seems so to him until he comes to Egypt. A large city in America has one mummy in its museum and considers it a precious possession. Some of the largest cities in the world have only a few specimens to show. The statement of Dr. Burch, a conscientious Egyptologist, that the time would probably never come when new tombs and mummies would not be found along the Nile, for instance, conveyed no particular meaning to me until our dahabiyeh reached the environs of Assiout. We know that people have been hunting for mummies here since long before the Christian era. Plundering temples and tombs seems to have been the principal occupation of some of the early conquerors. Some of the scientists estimate that fully seven hundred and thirty-one million bodies were embalmed in Egypt during the forty-five hundred years that the practice was followed; and there has been such an abominable and sacrilegious traffic during the ages that one barely expects to see what might be called a "new mummy" these later days.

But reports reached us of new "finds" up there in the cliffs beyond Assiout, and from the river we could see with our glasses clouds of dust and files of men walking up and down the mountainside, with baskets and big hampers on



their heads. These men, who looked like flies in the distance, Josef told us, were convicts, who had been sent to clear away the rubbish from the newly discovered tombs. So we immediately asked to have our boat tied up to the river-bank, although it was not particularly welcome to us just then, because we had been prowling off to various points in the desert for several days, for the purpose of making pictures, and we believed that we were again settled for several days of uninterrupted cruise on the Nile. But donkeys were engaged and we started up the long climb to where the clouds of dust, caused by the emptying of the convicts' baskets, shows us that there were operations in progress.

Oh, it is a sad, sad thing to be a convict in Egypt! At several points along the river and elsewhere, we had seen the state's prisoners performing the most arduous labour in the broiling sun that mows down human beings as if with a knife. One would not have believed that there were so many "bad men" in the world. Swarms of them, bound by manacles, were engaged in road-building, dike-building, water-carrying and quarrying. Poor, bedraggled, half-naked creatures! We had often seen the overseer's lash come down upon their naked

backs, when he was not satisfied with their labour—or better still, when the mood for whipping seemed to be upon him. We had seen the poor crawling and cringing human beings creeping wearily along beneath their heavy burdens; but worse sights awaited us at the cliffs overlooking Assiout. All along the trail, from the top of the big pink mountain to the valley, guards were stationed with guns ready to shoot any man who attempted to escape. The prisoners moving along with their baskets of debris, which was being deposited in a ravine, barely looked up as we passed. The Egyptian officials had heard of new tombs; they wanted to know what was inside—so the convicts had been sent to do the excavating.

It was a reminder of that older day when a king built his pyramid, temple or carved his tomb. He gave the word and tens of thousands of men were obliged to administer to the fulfilment of his commands. It seemed very like that day when the ruler desired something and because charity had not yet become a fashion, it was produced or accomplished, irrespective of the suffering or toll of life demanded. Read in ancient writings of Photims and Diodorus Siculus of the hardships endured by the Egyptians who had royal task-masters and it will be

possible to form a definite idea of what penal servitude was in that other day which created the artistic wonders at which the world has marveled for centuries. Their stories are similar to the weird tales that used to be afloat concerning convicts in Siberia. Slaves then worked under the lash and stick. Men, women and children were chained together and driven to work by soldiers who spoke a different language and were thus supposed to be deaf to their pleas for mercy. Another remnant of these ancient customs exists in the mind of the Egyptian of today. [He hates a whip or stick, and it is said that this hatred endures from the evil associations in his mind of that day when it fell upon his bare back, made him suffer and was the wand that indicated his menial position. Strike an Egyptian, even a fellah, with a whip and he bravely wants to defend himself from insult. Slap his face with your hand or indicate that you are about to strike him with your fist and he will run away like the veriest coward.]

We left our donkeys near the first square opening in the rock and continued our prowl around and upward by foot. And soon it seemed to us that Dr. Burch's computation of figures had been correct. It seemed that the seven hundred and thirty-one million mummies

of Egypt had been buried in the mountains behind Assiout—yet Josef, our dragoman, says that he climbed the mountain with other travelers less than six weeks ago and all was quiet here.

There were a few well-known tombs which were usually visited by Nile tourists but now it had been found that the entire mountain was literally honeycombed with tombs and in some of the great caverns that had been hewn out of the solid rock, mummies were piled one upon the other, sometimes reaching the ceiling, so that there were ten or fifteen layers of them like fish in a tin can. And now they were lying out there, side by side, in the hot sun by the roadway. It was one of the most gruesome sights I have ever witnessed. The old men of a day when Egypt ruled the world, were being disturbed in their quiet retreats and rudely mauled and hauled around in the sun and dust, by their successors, these poor Egyptian convicts of the present. And the mummies were all awaiting shipment to Cairo.

As I stood looking at the trail that was brown with mummy cloth, for the excavators put everything they find through a coarse sieve so that nothing of value may escape, and at the rows of proud men and women lying there in the sun, I

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remarked to a guard that I had always wanted a mummy's foot or hand for a paperweight.

"Which would you rather have?" he asked rather indifferently.

"A hand," I replied; and, taking up a stone, he walked along the path and disappeared behind a big stone; and returning promptly, he passed a hand to me, smiling in ghoulish glee. He had performed the operation before, doubtless so many times that he paid no attention to it—it meant no more than picking up a rock from the path. But I could not look for the face that I felt might give me a reproachful nod, so I wandered away from the others and sat down on a stone to rest in the shade. After I had been there some minutes, watching the endless chain of convicts filing up and down the hill, I received the fright of my life. At my side, easily within arm's reach, there was a small hole in the rock and protruding through this hole was the head of a brown man. He looked as if he were trying to escape before the excavators found him. In my fright for a moment I thought I saw him move; but realizing that this was merely a case of "nerves" I leaned back and studied his features closely. Mummies usually look more or less alike, but this one was different. His face was that of

a patrician. His features were as noble as if they had been cast in bronze. The sneer, so frequently detected on these tightly closed lips, was not there. His face was all calmness, as if he were merely closing his eyes and about to speak. But I watched him closely for a long time and he did not move. He had been there for centuries, perhaps before Rome was born, and the excavators above had merely detached the stones that made his hiding place. Perhaps I was the first to see him after his long sleep in the shade of the rock. At least, I liked to think so, and as I looked down in the valley, at the ancient city of Assiout, it suited my fancy to weave a little romance around his life; and before I left him, I looked back at his calm expression and he seemed to tell me that I had not been too far from the truth.

But I had been there longer than I suspected. Others had taken photographs of the convicts, the rows of mummies, the big boxes of porcelain, stone and wooden images—and they sent out a guard to tell me that it was time to leave if we wanted to be back in town before sunset.

“Better give that guard a shilling,” suggested Josef, as we passed the official who had given me the hand, “he says he gave you a souvenir.” So I gave him his shilling and he



“ HOLY MAN ” AT ASSIOUT.





touched his forehead to thank me. For a shilling he had committed a legal misdemeanour and he had been guilty of a gross sacrilege, to which I felt that I had been at least an accessory before the crime. He had misunderstood my request—probably that was it. I wanted a hand that had become detached in the process of excavation; but he could see no use looking around for anything that could be obtained so easily. So I wrapped a handkerchief around the rather delicate fingers, and my donkey boy threw it in his knapsack as we began the descent of the mountain. We passed along by the files of convicts with chips of limestone and rubbish on their heads. The day was over, but their enforced labours were not at an end. A guard was lashing a young fellow who was violently protesting that he did not deserve to be whipped.

When we came back from the mountains, we saw our first “holy man.” Since that day we have seen several, enough of them so that it makes one believe that being “holy” and naked is a rather profitable occupation in Egypt. It is difficult to see why there are not more of them, for what prevents the middle-aged man from suddenly deciding that he will henceforth become an object of veneration? It is a hard

life here, as life goes with most of the people, for most of them seem to be half-starved, overworked and weary of the struggle for existence. They would rather squat in sunshine or in shadow than to be up and doing, even though the occupation provided a fairly good profit. They love to rest—and, after awhile, they fall asleep. All night they sleep, and preferably from eleven o'clock in the morning until three or four in the afternoon they sleep, unless an exacting task master stands over them with a lash. So why not become "holy," sit in one place in the shade all day and all night and have a good rest? A string of beads is inexpensive, and passing it through one's fingers is not arduous labour. It seems highly preferable to carrying sand in a basket on one's head, preferable to running all day behind a donkey and pounding it with a club—even to the precarious existence that comes from grinding the hard, sun-baked mud with an iron instrument, resembling a thick hoe.

I have repeatedly asked our Mohammedan dragoman just what it is that makes one man holier than another, but he gives me no intelligent reply. He can cite plenty of instances in which, to his personal knowledge, these "holier than thou" fellows have sat still for many

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years, barely budging from a couple of square yards of ground; but these instances are not satisfactory answers to my questions. Whether they are self-constituted holy men, or are encouraged by others to enter the restful state, I cannot ascertain, but it seems to be plain that after they once obtain the reputation for "holiness," their earthly troubles are over, and it seems to be the general opinion that their troubles are also over after death.

The other day, when our dahabiyeh was approaching one of the perpetual twists and turns in the Nile, I saw Josef collecting a small coin from every member of the crew. Some of the boys who draw wages amounting to fifteen or twenty cents a day were passing him two or three cents, and they smiled as they made the contribution. Naturally, I suspected it was for some "holy man," or some one who could bring them "luck," for I had seen the operation before under slightly different circumstances. For these poor children—some of whom are big strapping fellows six feet tall—are always looking for "luck." They hang various charms on strings around their necks to bring them "luck." Before they drink Nile water they throw some of it overboard to bring them "luck." The other day when we were near the big red granite

scarabæus of Amenophis III, that looks like a gigantic frog about to jump into the sacred lake, they all received permission to leave the boat for five minutes, so they could run across the fields from the river and touch it for "luck." Convince them that the effort will bring them "luck," and they will try to lift a thousand pounds. Work for wages is work, but anything that somebody has said will bring "luck" suddenly becomes a moral duty and a pleasure.

Josef pointed to the little white tomb on the hill where we were about to arrive. "It is the tomb of a holy man," he said. It looked more like a whitewashed beehive, but, sure enough, it was the tomb of a sheik, exactly like so many others that dot the landscape throughout the length and breadth of Egypt.

"Very holy, and sailors' friend," continued Josef. No sailor on the Nile likes to pass this place without giving something because prayers here bring him luck.

And Josef saw no irony in this report of sailors' luck, when he said: "For fifty-three years the holy sheik Selim sat up there naked on the bank under a palm-tree and prayed for the sailors. He brought 'luck' to all the men working on the Nile."

"Luck!" Selim prayed for fifty-three years,

sat naked, ate only the food that was brought to him by pious Mohammedans and food and drink purchased from the voluntary contributions of the sailors. And now that they are "lucky" as a result, they draw fifteen cents for about fourteen hours' work. But they seem to be satisfied, so probably the rest of us should be. Old Selim has passed to his fathers, but an old servant who waited upon him after he was too old to move, now lives in the beehive tomb and comes out to meet passing boats and collect the revenue. In return, he promises "luck." Many well-known men in Egypt have left their dahabiyehs for the purpose of meeting the old man, who preferred being "holy" to working for a living. Even the Khedive once spent two hours in conversation with him, and that seemed to settle the matter for all time to come. It was what we would term good publicity in America, for the old man became holier than ever as a result of the khedival patronage.

More of these holy men are dead than alive—and their fame seems to grow after death. Their tombs are always on a hill-top, because it is easier to see them there and requires a little more physical exertion to make the pilgrimage. So we were pleased to pay our first visit to a real "holy man" at Assiout, a city that at least

since the fourth century A. D. has been a stronghold of Christian as well as of Mohammedan fanatics, who abused their bodies, endured tortures and became objects of reverence to the average man. A little further down the river was one of these gentlemen who became so famous in his day, and was visited by so many pilgrims, that regular camel routes were laid out to pass his resting-place, and he became so annoyed by his visitors that he was obliged to move farther into the desert. This proved that he was holier than at first believed, so the crowd followed him and contributed to his welfare until he passed on to the last rest and achieved a white beehive tomb.

The specimen of "holy man" that we saw looked to be anything but "holy," but even Josef, who says that he has "been in America," whenever we remind him that he does not pray so often as the others on the boat, one of whom seems to be eternally stretching himself toward Mecca—even Josef, who is something of a Mohammedan backslider, could not pass near to this filthy, dust-covered black man, who lay on a few palm leaves in the hot sun without a stitch of clothing to protect him—stepped up and touched his hand, as he did so depositing a coin. He had paid his "pilgrimage." The man

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grunted and rolled over in the sand when he received the contribution. Maybe he was praying. At least Josef seemed to think so, for he stood several minutes and watched the writhings of a poor lunatic who, in Christian countries, would have been in a padded cell. The man had scratched his finger-nails into his face and head. They had bled profusely and the blood clotted with lime dust had made big splotches over his countenance. This willingness to suffer had made him "holy." People here would not think much of a clean man who called himself "holy," and they would not believe much in his prayers or that he could bring them "luck."

But all of these things cannot be remedied in a day. At the festival of Hasan and Hosein in the larger towns of Egypt, even in Cairo, one is treated to the sight of the fanatics who march through the streets slashing themselves with knives and biting their arms and hands until they bleed. Perhaps these things are not "countenanced" by the authorities, and they are not even "popular" with the mass of the people, but the old idea of self-torture has a telling effect, and whoever is willing to behave in this manner, is quite likely to become "holy" in the eyes of his fellowmen.

Up in those rocks behind Assiout, early Christians found a retreat from oppression of Egyptian worshipers of strange gods. The city was the Lycopolis of the Greeks, and here John of Lycopolis was considered a prophet as well as a saint. But it was Christianity of a vague and almost pagan variety, only a little nearer to present forms than the worship of a hawkheaded god. The early Christians of upper Egypt denied the divinity of Christ, and some of their early forms of worship—still evident in the churches of the Copts and the Christians of Abyssinia—had so far degenerated as to have become practically the older and cruder religion that flourished in the land where temples of grandeur were erected to crocodiles.

I have been particularly interested during wanderings in Egypt to observe the survival of any of the ancient beliefs and practices, in the beliefs and practices of the present, and I have found many of them existent. This starvation—*holy-man-sit-still-in-the-shade* practice seems to have a more ancient origin than any of the others, for the most ancient Egyptians worshiped Nut, the goddess of the sky, and although it sounds slangy, and very modern American slang at that, there seems to be a good deal of Nut-worship in Egypt today. It is likely that



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the meaning of the word—like everything else in Egypt, excepting the ancient monuments of granite and stone—has degenerated in our time, but even the modern acceptance of the word remains. The average, sane and ordinary human being attracts no attention whatever, but let him starve, decline to drink water, become lean and filthy, cut his limbs and face, lacerate or amputate his arms, and he is immediately declared to be “holy.” Immediately, the poor and rich begin to contribute to his bee-hive tomb, and he is assured of what corresponds to “immortality”—or, at least, a fame of which we know nothing.

## CHAPTER VII

### ON AN EGYPTIAN FARM

**W**E wanted to visit an Egyptian farm, not one of those patches of mud over which water is poured by the fellaheen, but a genuine farm in the American sense of the word—if such a thing existed. Herodotus called Egypt “the gift of the Nile,” and the definition seems to become more appropriate as time passes, for beyond the banks of the river in most places the Arabian and Libyan deserts stretch away for so many miles that the casual observer and traveler cannot fail to believe that this barren distance which he constantly sees before him, with the exception of a few oases, where date palms flourish, is the agricultural extent of Egypt, south of the fertile delta.

But several times during our visit we have heard the names of rich farmers, although investigation proved the riches of some of them to consist chiefly of a camel or two and a few donkeys. But we knew that many of them have

beautiful homes in the cities, sometimes maintaining establishments in Cairo, Assuan and Luxor, and this seemed to be proof of the fact that there must be such a thing as a prosperous farmer in this land where in Bible times people all seemed to turn when there was famine in their own lands. So we were enthusiastic when our dragoman told us that he had received an invitation for us to visit a rich gentleman-farmer, upon whose *carte de visite* appears the name of Abd-el Karin M. Bey Elammary. Josef was asked to bring the American gentleman to his farm to spend an afternoon, and Josef felt the honour more than we did at the time, being particularly pleased when he sent back word by a running Ethiopian that we would arrive about four o'clock.

Quietly Josef informed me that we were about to become the guests of one of the richest farmers in all Egypt, and before our arrival he dropped enough incidental information about his Bey Elammary to arouse my curiosity, for in addition to being rich—perhaps millions of dollars—he was a very good man, said Josef, one who prayed all day long and constantly kept repeating the names of God and counting the beads of his Mohammedan rosary, no matter who was calling upon him or whatever distracting things

of earth endeavoured to wrest his attention from the prophet and paradise. And although Josef has not become so "modern" by contact with his Western clients that he cannot exaggerate with genuine Oriental adjectives and adverbs, we found that he had not overstated his case in regard to the farmer. Here, indeed, was a "farm" in the midst of the desert—here a grand old chap who plays the rôle of patriarch in such elegant fashion that we were astounded by what we saw, amused by the antiquity of it all, and delighted at the privilege of being the guests of one who seemed to be held in such profound awe and respect by the people around him. I could never find out whether it was his money or his goodness that commanded this respect; but perhaps it made no difference, the respect was there, and the old man doubtless knew that it was his goodness. It was a little after four o'clock in the afternoon when we arrived at great wheat fields, all irrigated by deep ditches that were fed from deeper wells, at every one of which a pair of oxen was turning a sakieh and raising big earthen buckets of water to a trough that conveyed it to the ditches and thence to the canals. As far away as we could see in the fields of ripening grain, these oxen-driven "pumps" were revolving in a ceaseless en-

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deavour to keep the land from baking and the grain from roasting on the ear.

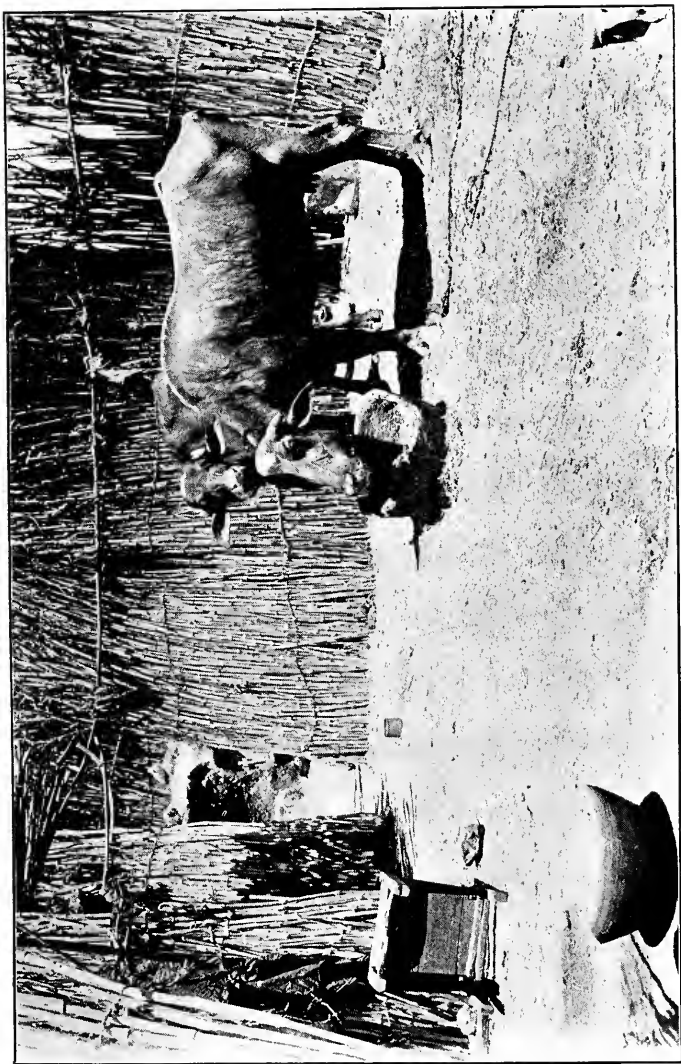
“We are arriving at Elammary,” said Josef; “he owns the entire village and this is the beginning of his farm.”

We passed a large mud village set among palms. “This is where his farm helpers live,” added the dragoman. “Six hundred of them—and off yonder is his residence.” He pointed toward the west to a big fortress-like pile of mud and sunbaked brick that had been whitewashed and gave it the appearance of being a big flat loaf of sugar. But it was imposing and seemed to be cool—set off there among the palms and mimosas. Immediately we arrived, a troupe of turbaned black boys from the Sudan and Abyssinia ran out to take charge of our animals and we were escorted into the courtyard of the big residence, where it seemed that the great farmer was holding court. He sat squatting on a couch, dressed in European clothes and wearing a red tarboosh on his head. In his hand was a big string of amber beads, which gradually passed between his thumb and index finger—and just as Josef had said, did not discontinue to pass, even when he appeared to be in animated conversation with us. One by one, we were taken up and presented, and he quite condescendingly

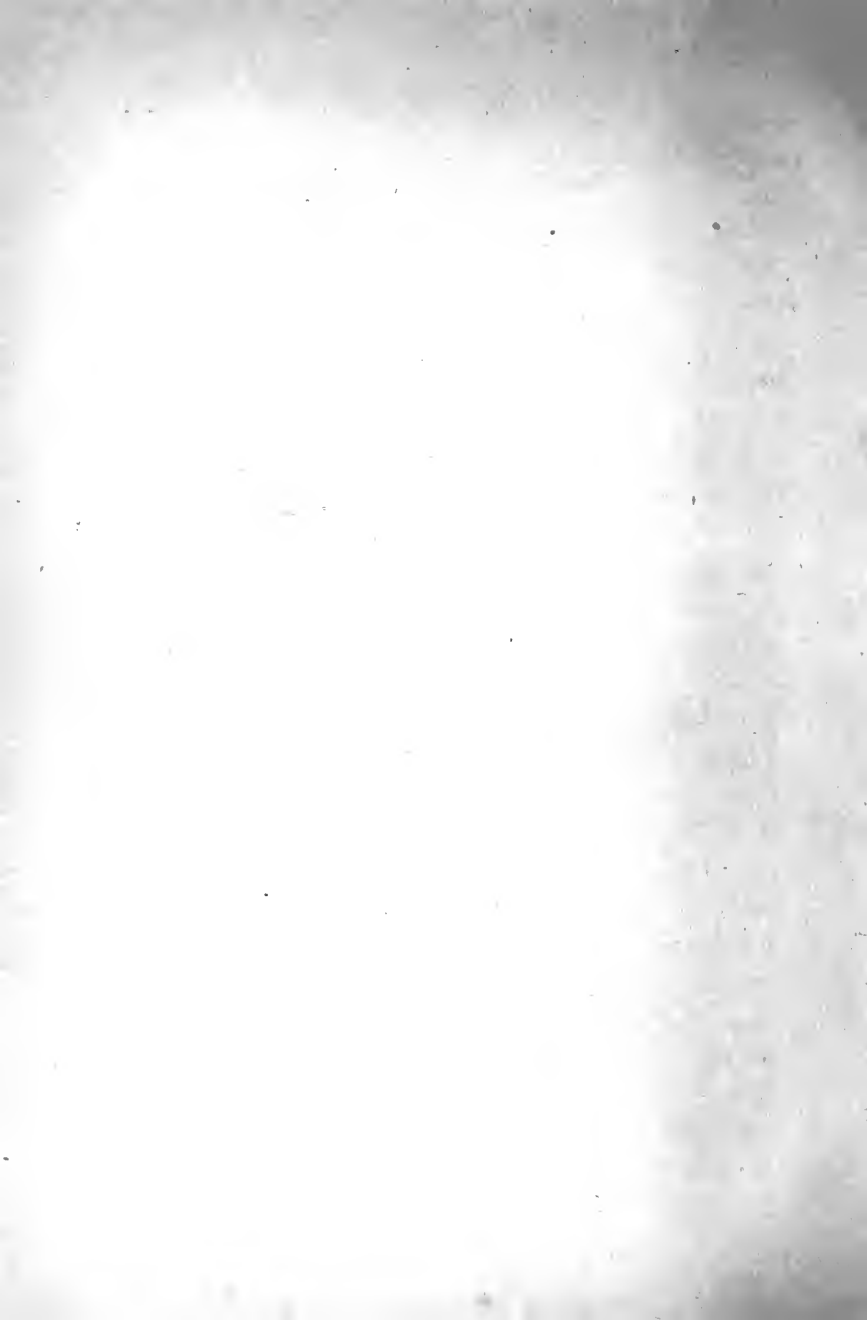
shook us by the hands, although we observed that Josef and all the others who addressed him, genuflected and kissed his hand as he extended it. Even his sons and brothers who were called in to be presented to us, prostrated themselves before him before we were recognized.

“I am very happy to receive American visitors,” he said, Josef acting as interpreter. “Once General Harrison, from America, came to call upon me, and we wrote many letters in after years.”

We were told to sit down on any one of six or seven big sofas over which Turkish rugs were spread. The sofas were set in the sand of the courtyard and rough matting was spread before each one for our feet to rest upon. As quickly as we were seated, about eight men, bearing goat-skins filled with cold water from the wells, entered and began to drench the ground around us so that it became sticky mud, but we were up high and dry, safe from danger; and, assuredly, the water had the desired effect—it cooled the air. After this operation, and as Elammary continued to chat with us, his servants began to bring us things to eat and things to drink. We had strange concoctions that were cooling and we had things that were red hot, all of which our host consumed with equal relish. Each



WATER BUFFALOES.





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servant, entering the courtyard, went directly to him, held the tray before him and knelt as he helped himself—before passing the tray to us. We stayed a little over two hours and during that time there was a constant round of refreshments, ending with sage tea and sweet Egyptian brown bread, which we soaked in the tea before we were able to get our teeth into it.

In relays, as we could stand the heat, we went out on the farm, observed things and took pictures. One large field was given over to threshing, where camels and oxen were going around in small circles treading out the grain. Men with large wooden forks were winnowing it and other men were packing it in sacks on the backs of camels to be carried to the storehouse. From a lofty knoll near the house I observed the workings of the farm, and, as far as I could see, there were camels, donkeys, oxen, water buffalo, all revolving in circles, performing the primitive tasks and adding to the fortune of the farmer. I expressed delight when I saw so many large camels at work and Elammary replied that he had over one hundred of them. Josef laughed as he heard an order in Arabic to one of the thirty or forty servants who stood around to do the master's bidding. In a short time I realized why he had laughed, for black boys came into

the courtyard leading five of the largest camels that ever lived. They were turned loose, and the big things lay down in the wet dirt of the yard and rolled like kittens, while the farmer laughed at their antics. They performed even better than he had hoped for.

After taking pictures of the threshing and winnowing operations we observed that much of the grain was lost and asked the farmer if it would not be more economical to install a threshing machine.

"I have no fuel," he replied. "There is no wood and men are cheaper here than coal. And, besides, I have ten thousand pigeons to pick up the grain that is lost. What they miss the goats or cows find—very little is lost, I assure you."

Elammary has a family of forty, which, coupled with at least fifty household servants and six hundred labourers, makes a group that must entail considerable responsibility. But he never finds his duties so pressing that he must lay down the amber rosary and stop praying for a single minute. A Mohammedan friend came to call upon him while we were there and, although he looked as pompous and prosperous as the bey himself, dressed in European clothes and surrounded by a crowd of servants, he went up to the millionaire farmer and bowed deeply as

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he pressed his lips to the extended hand. They chatted a few minutes and both counted their beads as they did so, proving that of far greater importance than their earthly affairs was the spectacular preparation for the life hereafter.

Elammary conducted us personally over a part of his farm, and he seemed to take much interest in the operation of the camera. We took pictures of him before we left, and he nervously prayed faster than usual as he sat or stood before the camera. He showed us his private mosque, and said that he had all of his men and servants come with him to prayer on Friday—but other times he asked them to pray where they were in the fields, for the five daily prayers in the mosque might seriously interfere with their work. Then the gentleman-farmer walked back to the courtyard with us, where our animals were brought for departure, and, after a hearty handshake, he told us that he hoped we would come again, and, as we looked back, we saw the old fellow's bronze face and bronze hand waving to us a farewell. And his amber beads sparkled in the sunshine as they rippled through the fingers of his other hand.

I took out the card that he had handed to us when we departed and somehow I felt that the old man had given his name an European spell-

ing, just as he has given so many modern twists to other things, although he protested that he is satisfied with ancient practices and has no desire to adopt any of the practices of modern tillers of the soil, doubtless reasoning as did Wu Ting Fang, when he was asked why the Chinese people did not try to become more modern. "We tried most of these new-fangled things a thousand years ago," replied Wu, "and we came to the conclusion that they didn't pay." Hear an Egyptian pronounce the bey's name, however, and then hear him pronounce the name of that splendid old adventurer, Abderrahman el-Omary, whose exploits are so fully set forth in Quatremere's translations from Arabic historians, and it seems to be the same. Only, a brief outline of the earlier el-Omary's operations in Egypt makes the romantic traveler hope that he has talked with his worthy descendant when he has chatted with this patriarch with one hundred camels and six hundred farm labourers.

The older bearer of the name lived in the early part of the ninth century. He is said to have been the great-great-grandson of the Calif Omar, so his ancestry was among the most illustrious in Islam. After receiving his education at Mecca, he went to Cairo, where he heard for

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the first time about the deserted gold mines in the Arabian desert near the Red Sea, whence the Pharaohs of Egypt are generally believed to have derived fabulous wealth. When he reached Cairo, Toulon was ruling the country, for the sultans of Bagdad, and el-Omary had to use great caution when he started out to relocate the mines, giving out word that he would conduct extensive trading operations in Upper Egypt and Nubia.

El-Omary found the mines, and his endeavour to open communication with the river brought him into continual conflict with the little kingdoms that preferred Christianity and dwelt near the junction of the Blue and White Niles.

It is all a tale of ruthless slaughter, this record of el-Omary's mining operations, but he continued to hold what he had set out to hold, and re-opened mine after mine until his slaves were so numerous that sixty thousand camels were employed to convey provisions for them from the Nile country. He also bought corn and other provisions from Egypt in such quantity that Toulon put a veto on further shipment, but removed it when he found that his action would bring him into battle with the Gold King of the East and one hundred thousand picked warriors.

El-Omary was killed while in the height of his power, but his name rings with all of the magical romance of the East; and recalling the events in his career, one thinks again of the puny present as compared to those richer and fuller days through which Egypt has passed. Elammary, bey, owns a hundred camels and broad acres and men cower before him because he is counted rich and powerful. But what is he by comparison to that earlier bearer of the name who counted his camels by tens of thousands and commanded a hundred thousand picked warriors and made the King of Egypt afraid!

And this visit served to call attention again to those mines in the desert near the Red Sea which have a charm for the curious, like reports of fountains of perpetual youth and pirates' treasure.

After el-Omary's death the source of his vast wealth seems to have been forgotten again, just as it had been forgotten for centuries since those builders of temples and tombs. It is unbelievable that the wealth and splendour of ancient Egypt owed its origin to the fertility of the narrow strip of land along the river bank or to the lowlands of the delta. It has been argued that Egypt itself might have populated its cities as a result of agriculture, but this scarcely

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seems to have been probable or possible above the First Cataract, yet there are ruins there which prove that it was once the home of a populous nation, whose architecture and national life seem to have been chiefly a reflection of what was transpiring farther down the Nile. Thus it is likely that the former prosperity of Nubia was due solely to the mines in the desert.

In that earlier day, there was little or no trade by way of the Red Sea, although the mines were located nearer to it than to the river, so the great route lay through the land that owed its prosperity to that and no other cause. When the sea route was opened, doubtless Nubia fell back into much of its present state. Probably the mines were worked from the dawn of history, just as Egyptian kings extracted great wealth from mines in the Sinai peninsula; although it is thought that many of the accounts of sapphire-mining in the latter district have been greatly overestimated. One thing is certain, however, ancient rulers of Egypt made the mines pay a heavy toll for their coffers, absolute proof being available that wealth from the desert country near the sea poured into Egypt from about 2500 B. C. and for three thousand years. One reader of hieroglyphics has interpreted them to mean that gold valued at \$350,000,000 was extracted

from Nubian mines. Many descriptions of the mines, their vast wealth, the hundreds of thousands of labourers, their methods of living and working have come down to us. In some of the rocky hills of the district there are numerous caves bearing inscriptions that indicate they were the identical homes of the slaves so employed. It is said, however, that during the fifth century, the mines were deserted. So, for about four centuries, the very existence of the treasure locked in the hills was forgotten. Now and again since el-Omary's brilliant exploits, there have arisen men who attempted to duplicate his career. There is no reason to believe that the mines have become exhausted, no proof that the precious metal does not still lurk somewhere in the region. But it, like too much of Egypt, seems to be a sealed book. One cannot say for certain what yet awaits the seeker after gold in this golden land.

The ancient Egyptian word for gold was "nub" and whether the land received its name from the golden sand or because of the fact that ancient Egypt drew gold from the Nubian hills, is still a question over which the scientists and specialists quarrel. It is the land of Cush of the Bible, probably giving rise to our modern slang use of the word, meaning gold or money,



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and Nubia seems always to have been the land of slaves, although the negroes in America had their origin from lands farther south. The men of Nubia have almost Caucasian faces that are black and shining, while their heads are covered with black hair that is straight and has not the slightest suggestion of kink or curl. But from the earliest times, Nubia seemed to provide the slaves for men of lighter complexion. One Egyptian king, who lived over five thousand years ago, records that in a single expedition into Nubia he captured over seven thousand slaves for his kingdom. The land always seems to have been the natural prey of the white and yellow men, and while about the time of Christ, after Nubia had received the advantages of Egyptian civilization for two thousand years and was able to organize expeditions of its own against its enemies, and even had its independent kingdom, the grasping hand from the north was too strong. Egypt, then Greece and Rome, and other conquering nations, swept over the land on the way to the Sudan, and Nubia again became a country of slaves. And thus it remains today, although the nations nominally permit no such thing as slavery. But the Nubian seems to be a natural servant and he does not seem to be unhappy in service. He

may be trusted and he is fairly industrious. People in Africa prefer Nubians above other blacks in their households, thus the Nile boats abound with them and the houses of the Egyptians seem to swarm with them. They earn a small sum of money, save it, and then return to their native land where living is cheap. In these northern lands of Africa, where all the races of earth seem to be fusing themselves into tan-coloured mixture that cannot be identified, the Nubians remain untainted and they are easily distinguished from all other black men of the dark continent.

One passes from Egypt into Nubia so gently, and physical things have been so gradually preparing themselves for the geographical change, that it takes the word of a dragoman to convince the traveler that he has reached the "golden land of Africa" and has in reality passed "the great divide" which separates the yellow men from the blacks.

The principal difference observed in the landscape is that the long mountains that have closely hugged the bank of the Nile for many miles, sometimes coming sheer to the water's edge on the eastern side and giving the impression that one is cruising along Norwegian fiords instead of the fancied trip upon the Nile, now

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recede farther into the distance. The sands of the desert, which grew pale and gray in the normal light of day back in Egypt, just beyond the narrow strip of brown that is watered by the Nile, now become a golden or daffodil yellow. In the evening, just after sunset, they glow like great prairies of gold leaf; in the early morning, like great sheets of burnished brass.

## CHAPTER VIII

### STRANGE CUSTOMS AND STRANGERS

ONE morning we asked the reis to stop the dahabiyeh soon after we came on deck.

We wanted a closer view of a scene that was taking place at the ridge of land at our right hand. A procession was filing along toward a dahabiyeh near the shore—there was weird and uncanny chanting, and something that was being carried on the shoulders of four men indicated that it was a funeral, for, like their ancient conquerors, these people prefer to bury their dead “on the other side of the river.” The climate is almost unbelievably hot—yesterday it registered 108 degrees in the shade—and the undertaking arrangements are nil, so that after a person dies, there is a speedy despatch to the tomb, often prepared before death. Usually about four hours elapses between death and burial. The Oriental thinks much of his tomb, and he can pay no greater compliment to the deceased than to offer the use of his “last resting-place” to other men. The rich, who have a tomb, often

permit men who have none to rest with them, as the wealthy merchant Joseph of Arimathea offered his tomb for the body of Jesus Christ. The custom is rigidly retained by Mohammedans—and Islam spreads its tentacles as far south as the wild men of Africa.

The corpse was wrapped in a rough winding sheet and laid upon a board with a pointed and gaudily painted slab of wood in front. Usually a gaudy cashmere shawl is used for this purpose in the cities. The body was carried along jauntily, by friends of the deceased, and the long funeral procession seemed to be having a difficult time of it in keeping up the pace. Directly behind the dead man, who was apparently a person of some importance in the world of yellow sands, came a troupe of wailing women. Josef says that the very good ones in the cities receive about a shilling for their services—and nobody ever worked harder for her money. These whom I saw deserve more, but probably receive less. Every one of them was an emotional actress. Perhaps she knew the deceased, perhaps not; but if her grief could be measured by the noise she made, she was indeed sadly stricken. As they approached the boat, where the body was deposited on deck for the ferry ride across the river, the women knelt in the wet sand, and

continued to raise their voices in lamentations. Then another woman came struggling forward, threw herself prostrate in the mud, and taking up big handfuls of wet earth, she smeared it on her face and arms as she moaned and screamed.

“Doubtless the mother or sister of the dead man,” said Josef; “she show how badly she feel.”

But the others seemed to pay no attention to her as they took their places in the boat, and the mourner continued to shout and flounder in the mud. After the others were ready to go, she jumped aboard the boat and flung herself into a muddy and bedraggled heap on deck.

“Suppose he was a single man?” I asked Josef, never able to curb my questionings in this matter of plural marriage, and he smiled.

“There are no single men in Egypt—I have told you—and no old maids,” he replied; “they come from England and America. Look by the corpse.”

I looked and there observed for the first time three big heaps of black rags. Inside each pile was a heavily veiled wife. But they were silent. Perhaps they were panting for breath beneath so much covering, or perhaps they were weeping for the departed, but it was plain that they were taking things fairly easy, while the paid mourn-

ers were doing the "work." The wailing continued even after the women saw us and our boat and became so distracted from their job as they watched us that it seemed they might not be doing it justice. A light wind filled the sail and the boat went away with its load across the river.

Another Mohammedan was soon to be visited by the angels Munkar and Nakir, who examine the dead shortly after they are placed in their graves. They command the corpse to sit upright and question him as to his faith. If his answers are satisfactory, they either permit him to rest in peace until the great day of judgment, or they take him with them to Paradise immediately; but if they are not pleased, the prophet taught that they beat him on the temples with iron maces, and after they have heaped earth on his body it is gnawed at by ninety-nine dragons, each of which has seven heads. Mohammedan graves are provided with two stones for the angels to sit upon during this examination, much as an attempt is made to make an earthly judge comfortable in his court-room.

If the angels take the dead directly to Paradise he will immediately be given as companions, women of pure musk who never grow old and who live in pearls sixty miles long and sixty

miles wide. Also it is consoling to know that good Mohammedans are one hundred and ten feet in height in Paradise and that they remain always not unlike a youth of about thirty years.

As we sat on deck and photographed the first Nubian "custom" that had caught our eyes, we also observed that near our boat's bow four big white cranes were combining business with pleasure. They were fishing from a sandbar, to which we had come perilously near, and they were watching the funeral party and ourselves. Birds do not seem to be afraid of human beings in Nubia and other Mohammedan countries. "Thou shalt not kill" applies to mosquitoes as well as to men, and the birds seem to appreciate the prophet's protecting command. Even in the lofty temples dedicated to ancient gods they build their nests and soar about the galleries unmolested, while the vast corridors early in the morning echo their merry chirpings. Usually a flock of swallows, or even wide-winged buzzards, seem to be incongruous in these holy places, quite as much so as the thousands of bats that cling to the gaudy frescoes and decorations; but once I saw birds in a temple where they appeared to belong.

This day which had begun auspiciously for a



traveler, also held another joy in store for us before the sun had climbed very high over the eastern hills. We were destined to become the guests of the strangest human beings I have ever seen, or if not that, at least men who seem to have drifted farther away from their natural condition than any others who have passed under my observation.

The first time I saw one of the species was near Shellal, at a desert market, where men came to exchange palm fiber for beans, camel hair for straw matting—and everything for Turkish coffee. As a couple of Bishareen gentlemen passed I pinched myself to see if I was really awake. They were the most amazing human creatures—even in this country, where the rural population has gone back to almost its wild state. Here were men who seemed to combine ancient Greek with modern savage. They carried long sticks, and swept along through the market with swagger strides that one might expect from a London sport, but the Bond-St. decadence was lacking. Their shoulders were thrown back and they held their heads erect. They were barefoot, but in a country where nine people out of ten are barefoot this is not a distinguishing mark, and even the motley crowd of Soudanese, Egyptians, Nubians and Abyssinians

turned to gaze at the Bishareen as they passed along.

They might have been gentlemen of the age of Pericles in Athens. But no, as they came nearer I observed that the garments which hung in graceful folds from their shoulders—in a manner that the Edwin Booths, Mansfields and Irvings have tried to copy when appearing in Roman or Grecian tragedies on the stage—were merely long strips of once-white cloth that had been flapped along in the yellow sands for too many weeks to have retained its whiteness. They were filthy, these garments, but they hung from the shoulders in folds and curves that masters of wardrobes have vainly sought to reproduce on the stage.

But if there was about the Bishareen the unmistakable evidence of Greek or Roman influence, there likewise remained in them much of the jungle and cave man. Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of this sort was their hair. The Bishareen boy's hair is never cut, and by the time he reaches young manhood it stands out in a woolly mass from four to six inches in length. Through it he thrusts a long white bone, and he daubs quantities of white grease in his hair—the more grease, the more beauty from his point of view and in the eyes of his fellow-



GROUP OF BISHAREEN.



men, so that sometimes chunks of lard-like stuff nearly an inch in diameter are smeared over his head, until it looks as if he had rubbed his wool with soapsuds—until the sun melts it, and then he loses his beautiful coiffure. The grease drips to his shoulders and smears the already dirty garments draped around his shoulders. On close inspection, a Bishareen looks as if he had stepped out of a vat of grease; on seeing him at a distance, one thinks that he is an ancient Athenian. Such men were too picturesque to be overlooked by the lecturer or movie, so the dragoman was instructed to take us to their homes.

“But they live far in the desert near the Red Sea,” said Josef at the time.

“Nevertheless, be on the lookout for any of their camps,” we cautioned; “you say they come across the desert to sell henna leaves to the natives for dyeing their finger-nails. Perhaps you can strike one of these bartering places.” This may have seemed like rather hopeless instructions, but we had already some experience, and the stranger has no idea how rapidly news travels in Egypt. As in the days before the telegraph, “talk” flashes up the river and into the desert almost as if it were carried on wires. At first we marveled at it. Probably ours is the

fastest dahabiyeh on the river, yet when we arrive at rather obscure villages, not reached by telegraph wires, the natives are there squatting on the bank awaiting our coming. They have heard all about the "white man who takes pictures," and gives baksheesh to his posers, so they too are hoping to add a little extra change to the week's earnings. They tell us how much we gave for taking pictures at other towns, perhaps some distance away, and they think they understand what is expected from them and strike "graceful" attitudes, so that we may select from among the crowds as star actors.

In a little desert village I gave a native spinner a shilling for his crude professional implements, and when I arrived at another village fully fifty miles away and offered half that amount for the same thing, I was told the price that I had paid at El Mazata. It is difficult to account for it, but this "wireless" telephone system works with remarkable speed and accuracy in Nubia and perhaps this explains why every one seems to be forever talking. Probably they are communicating the news.

So we were not surprised when Josef told us one morning that he had arranged with the head man of a crowd of fifty or so Bishareen to enter-

tain us in their "homes" about six miles distant from the river in the Arabian desert. In fact, Josef told us that the sheik was lavish in his invitations, and after he gave him a "present" that amounted to about three dollars in American money, the chief swore that we were his dearest friends and that we would remain so until the end of time—or words to that effect. He would act as our personal guide during the visit and command his people to do whatever we wanted them to do. They would sing, dance or fight—all for our pleasure. And just incidentally I would advise all future visitors to Bisha-reen camps to follow our example and make arrangements with the chief. It is necessary to "satisfy" these head men sooner or later—they must have money. Make any arrangements you will with the others and the chief is disgruntled and places obstacles in the way until he feels coin in his own hand. And for that matter, we found much the same condition existing in Egyptian villages farther down the Nile. Have the chief on your side and he slaps the others on the face and tells them what to do. When a man offers you a knife or spear for four shillings, and you offer him two, the chief struts forward, grabs the article from its owner's hands and puts it in yours, depositing in the

black man's hand the price that you have offered.

We rode to the camp on camels which the sheik had sent for us. As our dahabiyeh was being tied to the bank I saw those disdainful and haughty animals coming across the desert, each ridden by a Bishareen youngster who led it after we had taken our places on the waving and tossing monsters which seem never to give one the slightest suggestion of the direction in which they expect to jerk the rider. The "camp" was unlike any that we had previously visited and seemed to be as extraordinary as the Bishareen themselves. Of course the "tents" were in the roasting sun, upon sand upon which rain has not fallen within the memory of man. The dwellings were of pieces of rough matting, unevenly woven from reeds and cane and raised no more than a yard from the ground on tamarisk sticks and held down at the sides by heavy rocks. The sheik's tent—the finest of perhaps thirty or forty, was no higher than the others, but it was decorated by several large sheets of tin, flattened out from Standard Oil cans, and these glistened in the sun and gave the place almost a look of importance amid the squalid surroundings.

All of the Bishareen were out to greet us,





BISHAREEN CAMP.



smearred with fresh grease. Apparently the sheik had suggested to them that they would be well paid for their services—perhaps a shilling apiece, if they posed for the movies, although, of course, they had not the slightest idea of what motion pictures were and only blindly pretended to understand. They were smiling—even grinning—as they stood around their tents and observed us awkwardly endeavouring to retain our places on camels' backs when the creatures were being made to kneel for the dismounting of the visitors. And afterwards, we recalled that the camels were quickly led away. Perhaps they had twenty animals, and here was the only real trouble that we had with the Bishareen. None of them would pose with a camel and no owner of a camel would give his permission to have a camel photographed, although they did not seem to care if the animals were in the background of pictures.

“They think the camera kills the soul of the camel,” interpreted Josef, after the sheik had made a lengthy explanation.

“But surely the sheik does not think so,” we replied, endeavouring to flatter the ruler of the community. He assured us that he believed no such thing, but he quickly despatched all camels to a distance that he considered beyond the

range of the lens. This was at least his "whim," so we accommodated ourselves to it. But the Bishareen danced for us and they sang for us! They even fought for us. Once or twice the mock fight grew so warm and realistic that the sheik was obliged to yell at three young bucks to be more gentle with their antagonists.

And we saw only the males. I asked the sheik if they carried no women with them on their travels in the desert and without ceremony he stepped up to a tent, raised the matting and disclosed a really beautiful Bishareen girl of perhaps twenty years, who looked out and smiled playfully. She was squatting on a rug in her "room" that was not more than two yards square and she was laden with cheap jewelry and tattooed. Her hair was plaited in perhaps fifty little "pigtails" not larger than a lead pencil, every one of which looked as if it had been dipped in a can of grease.

Perhaps we spent two hours among the Bishareen and met with nothing but kindly hospitality, although they have a "record" and are popularly known as the "bad boys of the desert." They, like the fellaheen, claim to be the descendants of the ancient Egyptians, and say that rather than submit tamely to their conquerors they fled to the desert centuries ago, and certain



BISHAREEN GIRLS.



it is that they seem to have taken Roman or Grecian customs and manner with them. As we were starting away I looked toward the tent that the sheik had lifted for our inspection. Perhaps it was not good Bishareen manners—for these men keep their women secluded much as their Mohammedan brothers do—but the twenty-year-old girl, who was probably the mother of a large family, seemed to be expecting this and she raised the matting and waved her hand at me.

## CHAPTER IX

### GODS OF LOVE AND HATE

**A**FTER one has seen the various temples of Egypt that are scattered along the Nile from Denderah to Wady-Halfa at the Second Cataract, there is a feeling of gratitude that the first one visited on the upward journey was not the best nor the worst of the collection. It is not the most fully excavated, best preserved, awe-inspiring or the most beautiful. But it is majestic preparation for the joys to come. Here, as if the ancients themselves had planned it, as they planned so many incredible things, is the glorious pile erected to the goddess of Love. Probably the first thing that occurs to the traveler in Egypt is the fact that these ancient monuments are in a much better state of preservation than he had dared to hope for. The wonderful pigments, the blazing reds, greens and yellows, still shine in the sunlight, much as when they were placed upon the pillars by those artists who knew a secret of colour that has passed beyond the vast store of human



knowledge of the present. And that eternal turquoise blue that covers the ceilings! It is known as the "love-colour" of Egypt, and the world has copied it throughout the ages. The vaulted arches of these massive temples are all painted in the colours of the night sky. Bright, painted stars still twinkle in the blue as when the artists placed them there with the brush. Here, perhaps, as nowhere else, the antiquity of Egypt begins to reach the comprehension of the new-comer, and almost before he is aware of it he becomes deeply religious, forgetting for the hour the creeds that he has known from childhood and basking in the reveries that compel him to analyze not only himself and his infinitesimal part in time and space, but also his own thoughts as related to the thoughts of those millions who have gone before him.

Before the temples dedicated to fish-hawk-headed gods, crocodiles, cats and god-kings, it is something more than fortunate that the Nile traveler first sees the beautiful pile of stone dedicated to Hathor, the lady of love, in reality the Aphrodite of the later Greeks—the lady who still lives in our hearts and minds, although we no longer erect temples of stone to her or attempt to make her more easily understood by carving her smiling yet fearful face in stone.

As we sat on the deck of the dahabiyeh shortly after sunrise, waiting for the start to the temple of Hathor, I began to appreciate as I had not done before, that I was in the presence of the mightily ancient, the overwhelmingly ancient; but, as elsewhere, there was present the distressingly modern to complete the picture of contrast. Off there in the distance we could see the pylons of the temple, but at our sides were the half-naked and seemingly half-starved donkey boys, quarreling and fighting for patronage—these poor brown things, only a few grades removed in the intellectual scale from the animals they pounded with clubs and sticks, yet the descendants of men who carved pillars and embellished walls in a manner that has not been equaled by us, who have had forty centuries of human endeavour and experience. As I sat there, listening to the shouting of the Arab boys, I thought not of what they were saying, but that here on the Nile was the beginning of all things, excepting human life itself. Here was the cradle from which the human race looked upon the world and saw that it was beautiful and a thing well worth while. Here man said that he would cease his wanderings, as animals had wandered in the jungle, and here he would adapt himself to his conditions and improve his kind. And the Nile,



MOUNTED POLICEMAN.



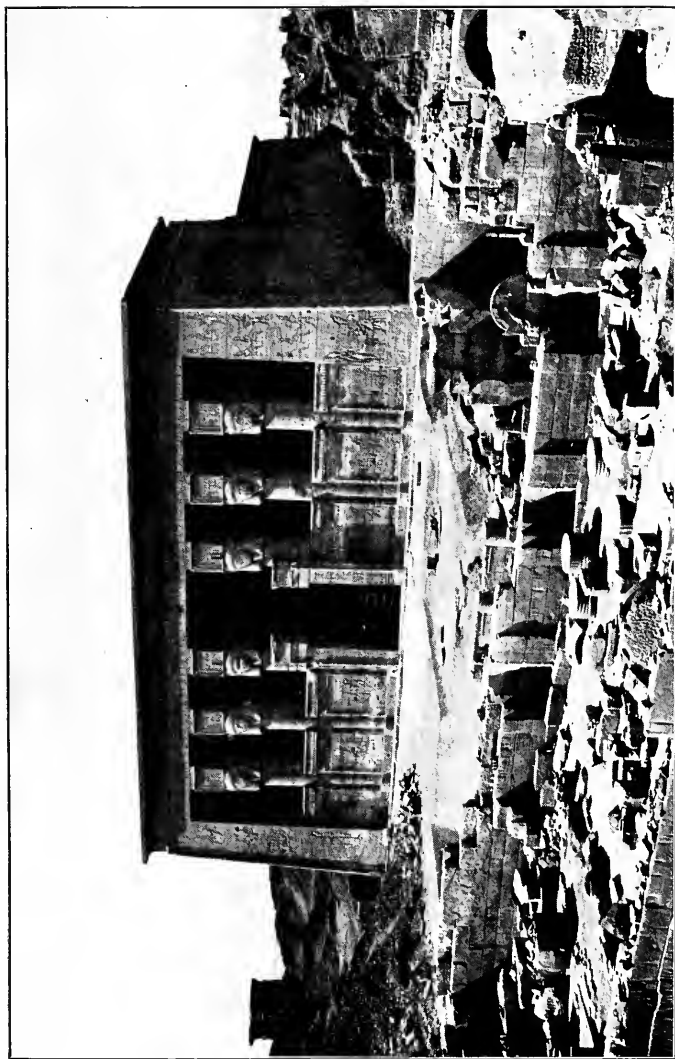
on which we were floating, was the source of his ambition.

Here he paused as he wandered westward—as men have been always wandering—and stopping long enough to raise food for himself, he created what is known as real property. Disputes about the land were settled and this was the beginning of law. The movement of the sun, moon and stars, it was found, had something to do with the Nile flood, so men watched the heavenly bodies carefully. There were men who devoted much time—even their whole lives—to these observations, and the students were the creators of the priesthood. Finally, the priests ordered temples to be built and thus began religion. The boldest leader of the people overcame the priests and became a king. These observations were not new, we had heard them always; but they came to me afresh as I sat by the bank of the Nile and looked out toward my first Egyptian temple.

But Josef, the dragoman, does not care much about musings, and his voice quickly brought me out of my reverie. Everything was ready for the start. A big black policeman came galloping up on an Arabian stallion, saying that he had received instructions from Cairo to accompany us.

“Very much beggars in Denderah,” said Josef, “and they keep away when they see the police.” He was picturesque, this policeman, and he seemed to have difficulty in reining his prancing horse to the pace taken by our donkeys, which prefer to follow trails or paths, which did not seem to be to the liking of the officer.

It is a futile and dangerous thing for a stranger to attempt to change conditions as he finds them in a foreign land, although he often suffer a pang of conscience in attempting to follow the rules laid down for him. For example, we would have rather taken the longer road, but the horse of the policeman bounded off the road into the fields of the fellaheen, and we followed him. We bumped along through wheat fields where the humble farmers looked up from their toil to see us pass and to measure the damage our passing had done to their crops. Perhaps the officer thought that a few donkey feet trample only a few blades of wheat—he said that they did not own the land and were what we call “squatters”—but perhaps he did not think at all. At any rate, we soon broke into a gallop and went flying along through the fields and over the small irrigation ditches, not more than a foot wide, into which the shaduf men were lifting water from the Nile in goatskins. And after an



GENERAL VIEW OF THE TEMPLE OF HATHOR, DENDERAH.





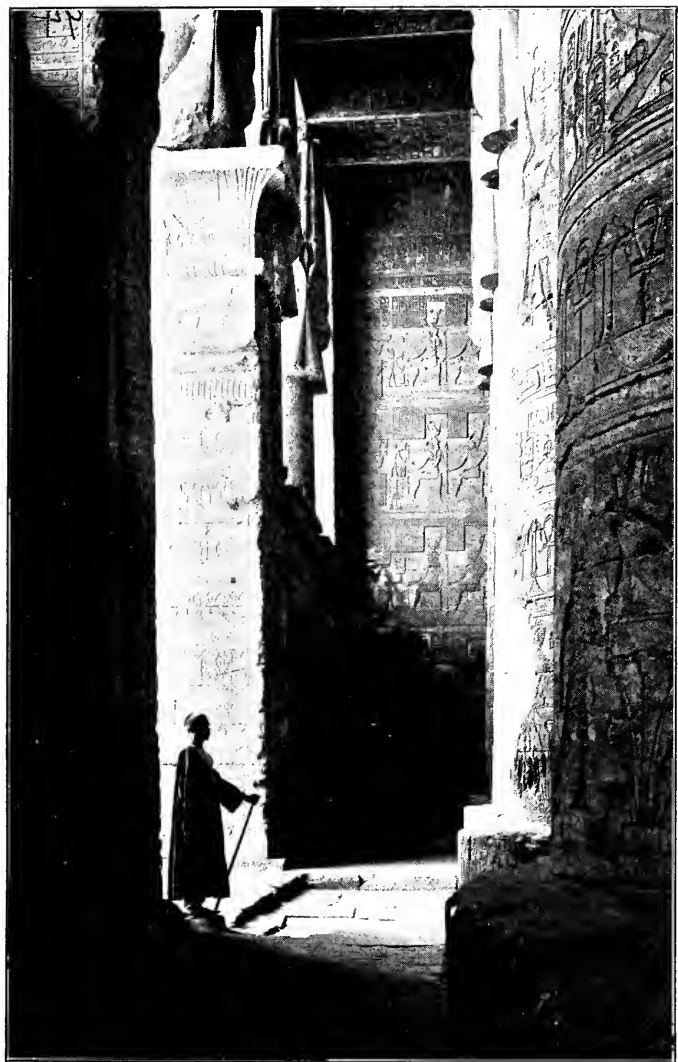
invigorating ride, in the still morning, we approached close to the temple and dismounted, finding the donkey boys at our sides. They had gone as fast on foot as had the animals. And donkey boys receive whatever gratuity you give them as their wages. One day, after a ride of sixteen miles over a rough road, I gave the boy who had followed me a shilling. He was delighted and told me that the dragoman usually told him that he was so small he could run sixteen miles for ten cents!

There is a solemn grandeur to Denderah. The temple stands on a brown mound of earth. Not long ago this earth reached to the top of the temple columns; but, by ceaseless toil, the debris has been removed and now the temple stands as it stood when first erected. One approaches it by large paving-stones that were the floor of the original entrance. Crowds of men and boys were removing the debris on their heads, and close inspection showed this to be a mass of broken sun-baked bricks and broken pottery—all souvenirs of that day when there was a large city here and Hathor smiled upon a worshiping population. The fields, as we approached, were littered with beautiful columns or granite ornaments. But one becomes used to this in Egypt. I have seen women washing clothes at the river-

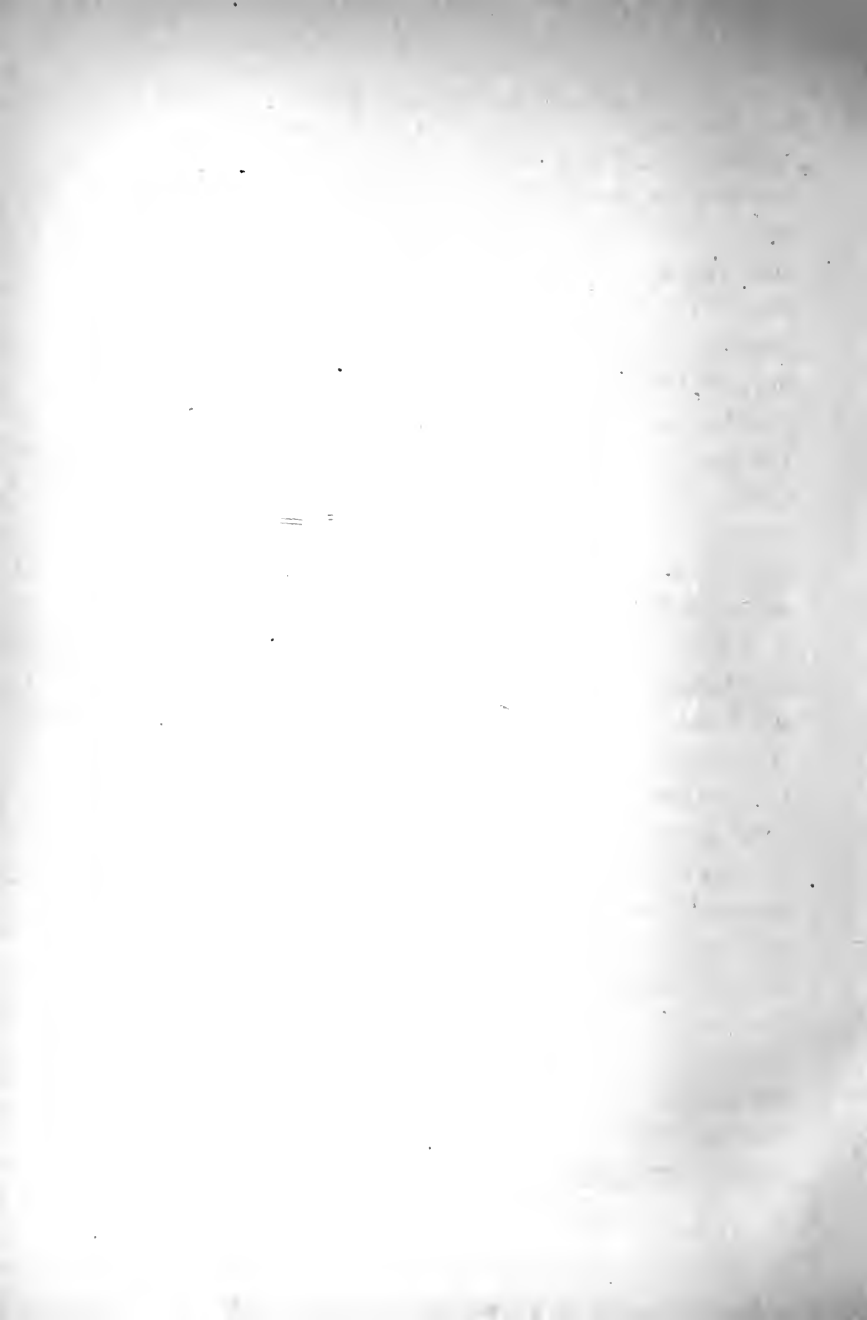
bank using a hieroglyphic slab as a washboard. I have seen finely carved black marble slabs used as steps to mudhouses. In the courtyard of a miserable mud house I saw a large red granite urn or vase fully three feet high—perhaps a holy water font from some temple—now containing enough earth to support a large plant which looked like a thistle. I have seen blue granite pillars, which were carved with infinite care, artistry and labour, helping to support walls that were built of tin cans, pots and mud.

Viewed from a close range, Hathor's face sometimes wears a weary expression. It caps all the big pillars that support the great roof at the entrance to the temple and it seems to be everywhere within and without. After entering by the main portal, one passes on and on to halls of great gloom, lighted by small apertures in the wall which show the latter to be several feet in thickness. Here were performed the mysterious rites of which we know comparatively nothing, but we carry candles and even in the gloom we discern wonderful sculptures and paintings on the walls. The mute figures are gesticulating to one another, dumbly motioning what they cannot say.

But poor Hathor! She had her day of glory, and is worshiped no more. She beckons and



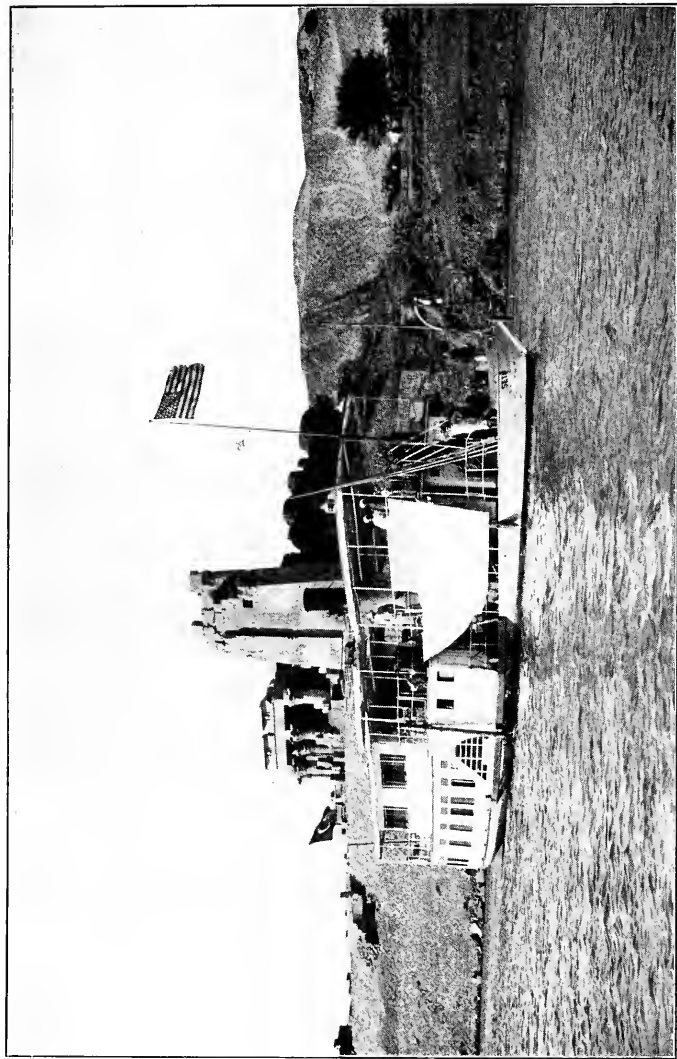
INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF HATHOR, DENDERAH.



seems to nod and smile in these paintings, but her day is over. No longer can she fascinate men. Men have passed on to other gods, but she seems to say: "Once men admired me." But we know that men do so no longer, and we listen to the voice of Josef, who leads us up the long staircases to the roof, where long priestly processions have marched with stately tread. We look down upon the poor fellaheen in their fields. They too, like Hathor, are dead. They seem to say: "I, too, was great; once men feared me, but they do so no longer." On the outer walls is Cleopatra's image, or a carving that bears her cartouche, and may have flattered her to suit her vanity. But Hathor's vanity must also have been flattered by such a temple. One recalls that beautiful lady of Venice who retired from the world when she was still beautiful so that men might not see her in old age. Perhaps Hathor would have preferred to remain covered from the world. But I think not. She still smiles, intoxicates and entices. She prefers to be seen and the excavators are catering to her whim. And now sitting in the courtyard of the temple one looks up at that face that had seemed so weary from a distance, and almost fancies that a malicious joy or a coquettish smile overspreads it. Hathor is again in the

golden sunlight. She may greet the dawn for she faces the east, just as Cleopatra on the other side may view the setting sun. But the features of the figure bearing Cleopatra's cartouche do not change. Strangely appropriate it is that the queen of love should be represented in stone at this shrine to Hathor; but the sculptor gave her classic features and a form that the scholars tell us Cleopatra did not bear at this time, for shown with her is her son, whose father was Julius Cæsar, already quite a youth. Different with the face of Hathor. As I sat in the shade of one of her mighty pillars and watched the men shoveling the accumulation of the ages, Hathor seemed to speak. "If men no longer care for me, why do they labour so hard that other men may see my face?"

The temple at Denderah is one of the most modern in Egypt, only boasting of something like two thousand years, which is not long in this land of eternity. History records, and several ancient chroniclers have commented upon the fact that the people of this city always held the crocodile in abhorrence, whereas the creatures were held in reverence in many parts of Egypt and worshiped at Kom Ombo.—Juvenal relates that a fight took place between the natives of Denderah and Kom Ombo, in which one of the



THE DABIYEH "SETI" AT KOM OMBO.





former stubbed his toe and fell, and when he was caught by his enemies he was cut up and eaten. It is said that the people of Denderah, to show their hatred, tracked and destroyed all the crocodiles that came their way, thus constantly feeding the flames for the feud between the two cities. Strabo is authority for the statement that the natives felt no fear in regard to crocodiles, and freely crossed the river, although the danger was well known even to peoples who considered them sacred.

And with this vision of the love goddess in our minds, where it will always remain, we drifted along the river, one day landing at the other temple whose priests had raged and fumed at the worshipers of Denderah—that temple which of all in Egypt seemed to be the antithesis of the first that met our eyes. Instinctively we felt that we could not have much in common with worshipers of the crocodile, and perhaps our prejudices were enhanced by our knowledge of the bitter hatred that existed here for our friend Hathor of Denderah. For we felt that whatever we might see further up the river, we should not come into more intimate associations elsewhere with a goddess. We liked to recall our day with her, even in our daily routine of new sights and fascinations. And, like many

another traveler, each of us vowed to remain true to our first love. Yet one of the temples that interested us most was that stately pile at Kom Ombo. After all, one might expect the goddess of Love to be enshrined amid beautiful columns and bright paintings and carvings. It would seem quite likely that a people who worshiped the sun-god or gods that were judges of right and justice, should be able to erect splendid homes for their deities. Confucius said one may judge a people by the music it practises; but a very safe rule is to judge men by their religion and by their architecture. Likely as not, the stranger will not expect much of a house of worship built by worshipers of one of the lowliest forms of life that exists. They must have been very far down in the scale of mentality, for we know that even the people of their own time, in the not far distant city of Edfu, where the hawk-god was worshiped, detested the crocodile and hated the people of Kom Ombo with a fanatical hatred on account of crocodile worship. And yet we cannot see such a difference between bending the knee to Horus or Sebek. But Horus was the Apollo of the ancient world, the son of Isis and Osiris—and Sebek was just a crocodile—that drawling lizardly thing of destruction that causes one to

shudder when beholding him in his native haunts. And in this connection, with my mind always on the links that bind ancient Egypt with the present, it pleased me as I sat resting by a pillar in Sebek's temple, to observe more lizards creeping and capering about than I had observed elsewhere. In the Hawk temple at Edfu, five hawks had perched themselves before me in the open court, and now the little four-legged creatures, which seemed to be lineal descendants of Sebek, found asylum in his majestic temple at Kom Ombo.

Ascending or descending the Nile, one is struck with the fact that most of the temples are set far back from the present banks of the river, although the old stream may have changed its course many times since it began to flow down through Egypt to bring life to millions of people. It is now a two- or three-hour donkey ride to some of the ancient shrines. They seem to be tucked away and forgotten—away off there in rubbish heaps of the centuries; and in reality, many of them are now coming into the glare of the sun for the first time since the shifting sands of the desert filled them with dirt and buried them as completely as their builders were buried in the rock tombs of the mountains. Thus, Josef, our dragoman, can remember when a

populous mud-village was standing upon a mound that inclosed the temple of Hathor at Denderah. An old hotel proprietor at Luxor told me that he could remember when sand and debris threatened to cover the ancient temple there. Destructive agencies seem to have been at work on all of them and their sites—all excepting the temple of the crocodile at Kom Ombo—and while the Nile seemed to be encroaching too near the foundations here and did some damage, that has been checked by the restoration clan, and perhaps this temple will be standing when some of the others have passed to memory.

Approaching it from the north or south shore of the river, one looks far ahead and at a sharp bend observes the splendid columns supporting the gigantic stones of the roof. It is a structure whose builders gave an imposing site that no Nile travelers might overlook. It still rises like some majestic castle on the Rhine—the observed of all passers-by. And yet it was erected by crocodile worshipers! Strabo, who left chatty accounts of so much that occurred in Egypt of ancient days, declares that in the sacred lake of Kom Ombo, the crocodile was not only worshiped, but adorned with rare jewels. Necklaces of almost priceless value were hung

about the creatures' necks, and great festivals were held in their honour. But it all seemed to be so remote from our civilization, so absolutely foreign to our natures, that I confess as I climbed the steep bank to this shrine of Sebek, I felt only what might be called a dutiful, pitying and historical interest.

Yet in the temple of the crocodile I saw things which the guide books overlook and do not mention; several things which closely connect the temple with our life of the present day, as I had found them in no other temple of Egypt. After all, we no longer worship the crocodile, but men who did seem to have progressed in many of the arts and sciences about as far as we have; and before I left the place I came to the conclusion—so often reached before—that when we sneer at men of other beliefs we usually do so in ignorance. The excavators have had rich reward for their diggings in this temple and its vicinity, for it would seem that the embalmers were as busy making mummies of crocodiles here as they were elsewhere preserving the human form divine for all eternity. The museums of the world have been stocked with mummies of crocodiles from Kom Ombo. Men have found big vaults and chapels literally packed with these creatures in layers like sardines in a box, and

some of them were monsters, much larger than the average specimen to be found in zoölogical gardens today. As I looked into one chapel, a half dozen snouts were pointed toward me, and twelve-footers looked as if they were about to crawl forth and devour the desecrators of their temple. But they, like the other mummies, have been too long still to move at the boldest desecration. The other day I saw men taking mummies out of pits and piling them beside the path like cordwood. "One, two, three"—only they sang as they worked—and an ancient gentleman or lady of Egypt was thrown to the top of the heap. There were many dogs around and I asked one of the guards if they ever gnawed at the mummies. "No," he replied with a grin, "they prefer fresh meat."

Robert Hichens once remarked that buildings have personalities, and while the remark seemed to be a little far-fetched at the time, I fully subscribe to it after seeing Egypt and Nubia. Some buildings put forth a compelling, yet tender appeal that causes one to desire to worship. Others seem to be stately and grand, but repelling and cold in their grandeur. Kom Ombo, whether from association of ideas or not, seems, on close inspection, to be positively ugly. Its colossal pillars and tremendous arcades and ap-

proaches are much the same as they are in other temples, but there is not in the whole, the lace-like structure, the dream-compelling loveliness that the temple visitor will discern sooner or later in most of the others. But what interested me most was to go to the rear wall of the temple and find on the walls, where one usually finds gods and goddesses, and the kings and priests making offerings to them, a complete surgical laboratory! These carvings date at least from the Ptolemaic era in Egyptian history—and this is the despised temple of the crocodile—yet here we have the strongest reminder that we are about as were the men who directed the chisel and mallet. Even in surgery, we have not progressed to any marked degree. In the carvings, the surgeon stands beside his operating table, and, on the wall beside him, hang most of the instruments that are familiar to surgeons today for the performance of the most delicate operations. In outline and general curvature they have changed very little in the course of the centuries, and some today retain exactly the shape pictured on the walls.

Scientists have long claimed that the ancient Egyptians attended lectures on philosophy and medical science, but their belief has been challenged. Here, at Kom Ombo, it seems to me is

the proof positive that medicine had reached a lofty status in ancient Egypt, when, to paraphrase Disraeli, the other nations of the world were running around with blue paint on their faces. Here it seems is the most modern ancient thing in Egypt, for while many of the carvings and paintings point to the fact that life here three or four thousand years ago was not so much different from life now, the surgical carvings and paintings prove that we have not even progressed an appreciable degree in science, which is our boast. Yet beside the old is the new, here at Kom Ombo, and I do not refer to the surgical drawings. Smoke stacks are comparatively rare throughout the long reaches of the Nile, that races down to the Mediterranean from central Africa. A few of them in the villages mark the sites of sugar factories—but coal is more expensive than men, as I have heard more than once in Nubia, and there have been some dismal experiments in attempting to prove to the contrary. Beside the crocodile temple is what is said to be the largest pumping station in the world, erected through the energies of London capitalists, who have successfully reclaimed thousands of acres of land that was considered worthless until it was watered by artificial means from the Nile flood. The bank here



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is high, but great pumps fill large canals and these flow in all directions and cause the land to bear three crops a year. The investment has paid handsomely, and only goes to prove that if it had water, the land of Arabian and Libyan deserts would produce crops that would be difficult to equal elsewhere on earth. As it is, there are only date palms, melon vines, cucumbers, peas and beans, which are planted by the fellaheen in the Nile mud and kept from baking by the buckets in the hands of the peasants whose muscles must ache and whose heads must grow dizzy—but “men are cheaper than coal in Nubia”—and doubtless will be for many years to come.

## CHAPTER X

### AN ANCIENT METROPOLIS

ONE never knows how far a dahabiyeh will run in a single day. As soon as the sun beams a little light over the eastern horizon, the boys pull the big stakes which have kept you from drifting during the night, and as they sing and the reis rings his bell, all begins merrily for the day. The wind rarely blows in the early morning in Egypt; or, if it does, it is one of those gentle winds that are welcome. The first few mornings, after watching these operations, it seemed that the destination might be reached before night—that one might start back on the following day. But everything in Egypt seems to be carefree and optimistic, at least, to the optimist. But after a few days of Nile sailing these pretty harbingers of speed have no effect. There are sandbars, and the river itself seems to turn and bend like a corkscrew; at this season of year there are winds from the desert during the day such as one never dreamed could blow, hot winds laden with little

funnels of sand that come sweeping along like miniature cyclones and not only impede the progress of the boat, but practically stop it until they have passed—and as they sometimes last for no longer than three minutes, and sometimes for three days, speculation on the dahabiyeh's run during the fourteen or fifteen hours of daylight is much more uncertain than upon the number of miles that will be made by an Atlantic liner between noon and noon. Many days ago we gave up all schedules. We merely said that when we reached Philæ we would visit "Pharaoh's Bed," when we were at Abu Simbel, we would wait until we could see the morning sun light up the sanctuaries of the temple, but we soon learned that it was futile to say that we would do so on Tuesday morning or Saturday morning. The Nile is dictatorial and stubborn, and usually seems to take delight in throwing the well-laid plans of men into confusion.

It was after several days of drifting in this fashion that we tied up to the bank for the night to wait for another day's start. It was exactly like so many other tie-ups had been. A Nubian boy touched a little brass gong that told us dinner was ready—a dinner of eight courses, which seems to be the Egyptian's idea of how a white

man should enjoy himself—and before we knew it, the crew were squatting on the bank, in little circles of four or five around a single pot of beans and lentils, into which they dipped pieces of black bread, which they conveyed to their mouths amid what has always seemed to be ceaseless chatter and more “table-talk” than things to eat. Our dinner was eaten, and about eight o’clock I came on deck to sit and smoke in the moonlight, and it was by the merest chance that I looked out over the slowly receding bank of the river, toward the big rose-coloured mountain range that formed a background to the eternal picture—the splendid panorama on the banks of the Nile.

Two massive things stood up like sentinels in the moonlight, two gigantic creatures with heads as large as the largest automobile I had ever seen, perhaps as large as a small freight car—and the figures were proportionate. The great silent creatures had great hands resting on their knees and they were seated on gigantic chairs that rested on high pedestals. They seemed quite appalling, and while there was no question in my mind as to the identity of our watchmen for the night, I sent for the dragoman. It was one of those moments when one does not care to take his own beliefs and opinions and wants the



COLOSSI OF MEMNON.



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corroboration of one whom he considers an authority.

“The Colossi of Memnon,” said Josef, “we are at old Thebes. Up there is the Rameseum, over there the temple of Karnak, and, in the distance, you can see the temple of Luxor.”

He said it as he might have said: “Mrs. Smith lives over there, and next to that is the Jones farm, while over there is the brick factory.”

Yet we were at Thebes, once the most wonderful city in the world, the city which Homer said “had a hundred gates,” the city through which dashed twenty thousand chariots of war when the King raised his hand, the city that possessed the most majestic buildings that have ever been constructed by man, the city that for centuries caused the whole world to tremble, certainly the greatest metropolis of olden days, and still showing a site upon which the entire city of Paris could be set down; and yet Josef and his boatmen were unmoved. If the Colossi of Memnon had not been so far back from the river, the boys would have had no hesitancy in hitching our boat to one of their toes, instead of going to the trouble of driving a stake.

“We’ll visit the Colossi tomorrow,” said Josef wearily.

“Perhaps,” I replied, “but I’ll visit the Colossi tonight,” and I quickly ran down the little plank to the shore and directed my steps through the fields to the figures that once marked the approach to a temple, but now seemed merely to be serving as guards for a lonely dahabiyeh, whose crew cared no more for them than for any stone we had passed on the Nile voyage. They were further back from the river than had seemed at first glance from the deck. There were wide fields to be covered before I arrived at their pedestals, but they became more awe-inspiring and majestic with each step in their direction. Perhaps the moonlight helped to veil the mutilation that has crept over the faces in the centuries that have passed. Two big crowns that once stood upon their heads are gone, and in the daytime it is difficult to trace their facial features, but at night they do not lack expression. Never had I seen anything that seemed to look down with such ironic scorn upon the present. A day to them is but an electric spark of light, a year is like the flash of a star, a century but the winking of an eye!

As I sat there beside them in the moonlight in the forsaken fields they paid no attention to me. But why should they? They paid no attention when the great Emperor Hadrian came here



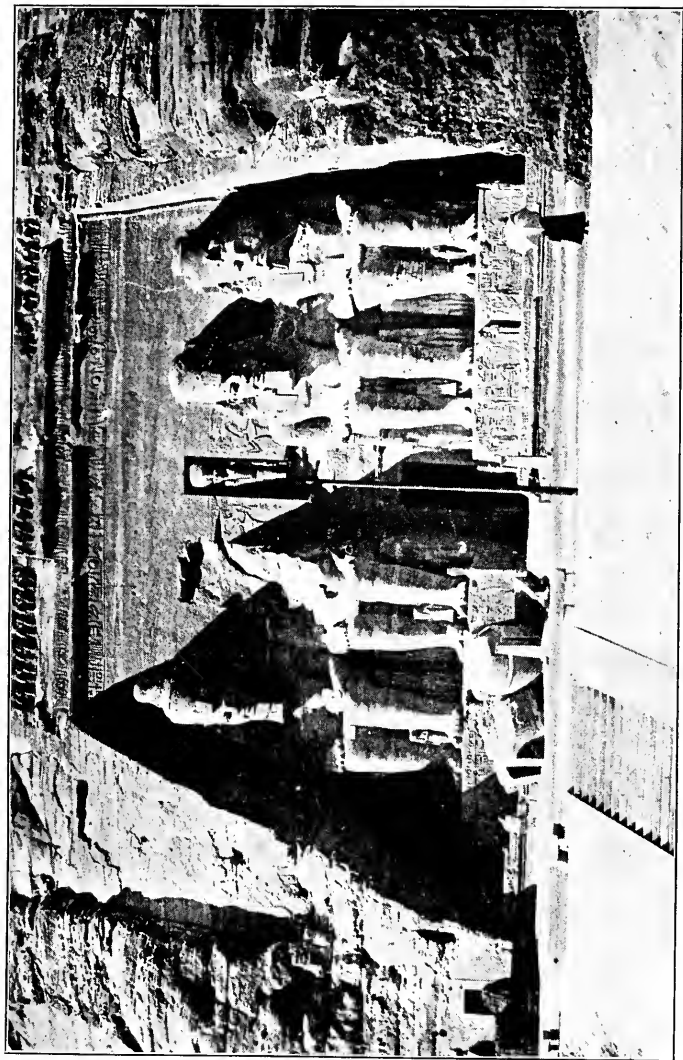
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with a vast retinue and spent several days at their feet. They are not respecters of persons. They cared no more for those modern emperors of what we call ancient Rome than for the humble fellaheen who till the fields at their bases. They are weary, perhaps weary of the vast processions of men who have passed them during thousands of years. There was never such stately dignity; never such lofty scorn. The hour grew late and I left the giant sentinels with a vow to return early next morning as Strabo had done, Juvenal, Sabina, Ælius Gallus, Hadrian and mighty men of the world. Some of them declared that the Colossus to the north was vocal at sunrise, the Caruso of the ancient world. The phenomenon seems to have been noted down about the time of the beginning of the Christian era, and the children of the world have read about it since that time in their geographies. Some scientists have believed that the early sunrise caused the stone to vibrate after the cool night, causing the statue to emit a wailing, mournful sound. Others have believed that it was a trick of the ancient priests, who concealed themselves in the statue and made the sound themselves.

But Memnon's singing days are over. Juvenal declares that he heard him and so did Ha-

drian. But in the early morning, when sunrise found me at its base, there was no sound, excepting the singing of the fellaheen boys at their work. The colossus was silent and grim—like his partner, he declined to vocalize.

Here, it seems was the original idiot who sought to borrow fame by linking his name with something immortal. Here was the beginning of scratching one's name where the passers-by of future generations might not entirely forget. The legs of the Colossi are covered with names of visitors who came here during the Roman empire. The court poet Balbilla left a poem to declare that Memnon recognized Hadrian, and another ancient Roman said in verse that the "song" was the wail of Memnon for the injuries wrought upon it by Cambyses. Other visitors to Thebes may be more impressed by the fluted and lotus-decked columns of the temples, by the gigantic statues of men, and images of sphinxes, by the grandeur of the Rameseum, the pink temple against the mountainside, erected by Hatasu, the Queen Elizabeth of ancient Egypt, who ever wore the artificial beard of a Pharaoh, the black marble statues of cat-headed goddesses, by the majestic tombs of the kings in the mountains beyond—there is majesty to all of these relics of the past; grandeur that the world



THE RAMESEUM.



does not know today, awful solemnity, and a suggestion of the nothingness of the present; but I prefer to remember Thebes by those dignified gentlemen who sit with their hands on their knees. There is the "demonstration" attitude advocated by modern mental scientists. There is no such calm as that which spreads itself on the fertile plain at their feet. They have seen Pharaohs depart and kings return, the centuries of men's joys, and they have seen whole dynasties lowered into the tomb—but they changed not and did not alter their expression. The toilers at their heels heed them not, nor do dragomen who bring the curious herd along the Nile. Only those visitors who come from afar pause long enough to contemplate their eternal majesty. But the Colossi care not. Nothing that men would do could cause them to care. They merely sit there and look toward the rising sun.

"Once an English woman asked me: 'Who are those Johnnies out there?' " said Josef, as he saw me still watching the Colossi as night was approaching again. "I told her they were the Colossi of Memnon, two of the oldest gentlemen in Egypt, and she said: 'They certainly look it,' at the same time telling me to take her where something worth while was going on—

meaning afternoon tea at the Winter Palace hotel at Luxor."

And with subtle Oriental irony, it seemed to me, Josef contrived to bring us to the same rose garden at the hour for tea. Nowadays it is more fashionable to have one's tea at Luxor than on the Riviera or in Switzerland, and although "out of season" there were a few English women puffing cigarettes and chattering about the absurdity of Turkish coffee when one might be drinking the green beverage. Over across the river sat the two "Johnnies" and of course it was a fancy, but I imagined that I read their thoughts. We seemed to be thinking of the same thing, the Messrs. Memnon and I, as we watched the cigarette and tea fiends from King George's little island near the Irish coast.

But, after all, as Josef reminded us one morning, "the Colossi of Memnon are not all there is to see in Thebes," and, acting on his suggestion, we allowed our dahabiyeh to remain moored to the Theban bank for many days. Each night when we returned, weary and dusty from the day's rambles, we were informed that we had not yet seen what our dragoman considered the "principal sight," so the next morning's sun usually found us preparing to mount donkeys for a programmed inspection of a temple or

tomb, and it seemed that Thebes became more and more awesome, inspiring and fascinating as the days passed.

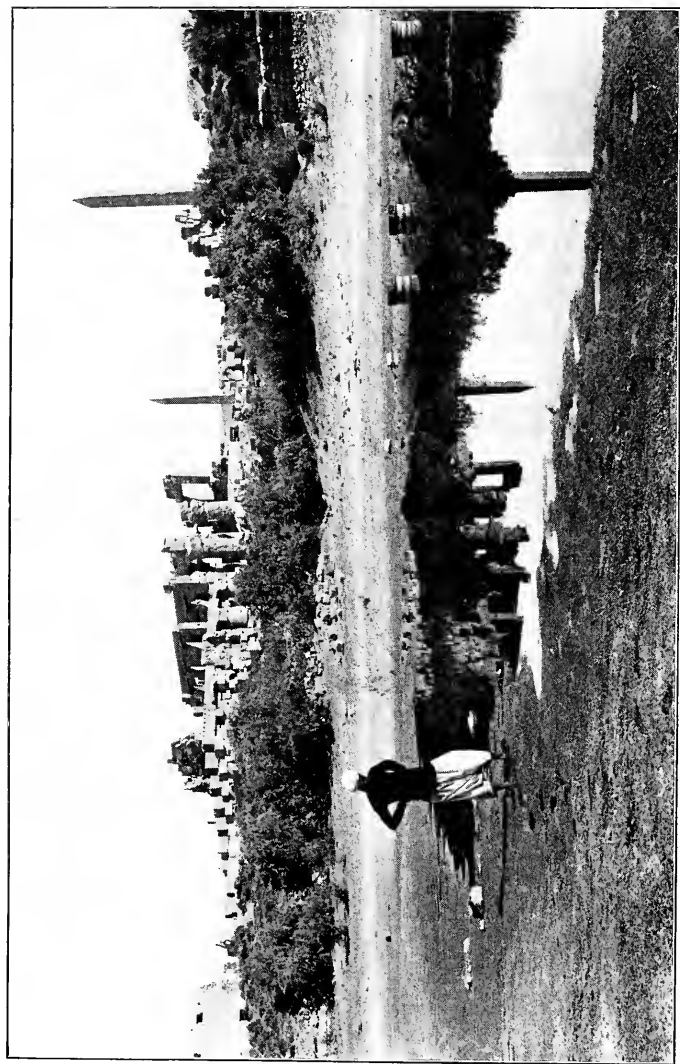
During the first days of our visit, we wanted no program and felt that we had never enjoyed fuller days in our lives. It never rains here. One takes no thought of the weather in planning the day's excursion, so little wonder that the site was not passed by those ancient builders of cities who must have loved the sunshine and quickly recognized that here was an ideal halting-place in the march of civilization southward. One loiters by stately avenues of sphinxes, goes into colossal temples, inspects gorgeous pillars that reach their highly-coloured caps an almost incredible distance toward the sky, sits in the shade of colossal blue granite statues, one bathes in the sunlight of this magnificent city of dreams, chats with the poor remnants of humanity now living here, and then when the day is done, and when several days are done, returns to the dahabiyeh to find that the "principal sights" have been overlooked altogether, so after a while we give ourselves over to the hands of Josef again and tell him to show us finally what most attracts the attention of the crowds who come here from foreign lands.

And then, as if he had learned his guidebook

verbatim, like a teacher pulling the petals from a flower, one by one, to demonstrate the principles of botany, we follow his program closely. It was far greater joy to stumble upon the sacred lake beside a temple at Karnak, to sit down beside the giant granite scarab and reconstruct in a mental picture those stately processions that filed into the lake from stone quays and performed religious ablutions. The scarab, that ever present symbol of fertility! One has seen its figure carved on green, blue or brown steatite, basalt, jasper, lapis-lazuli, carnelian and glass. Here it is in enduring granite! One feels that he has made the discovery, just as he feels he has made a discovery when unaccompanied and unguided he wanders alone into any one of the million nooks of Thebes and comes upon something that prompts him to hesitate. Here, as the inscriptions prove, was the chief religious center of Egypt for two thousand years, and the most powerful kings of the land seem each to have tried to outdo his predecessor in lavish expenditure. Thebes is not a place merely to see. One prefers to inhale it and digest its wonders at leisure.

So after we had finished Josef's program, after we had seen all the places where the guide-books told us to go, and our dragoman had re-





SACRED LAKE, KARNAK.



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cited his rhapsodic prose, partly learned from guidebooks and partly from word of mouth, for he has spent his life among these ancient splendours, frequently enough as interpreter for savants and scientists, whose every observation and word he seems to recall; for Josef, like his brethren of Egypt, is an observant person with a memory like a sponge that seems to absorb everything that passes under his observation, after he announced that we had "done" Thebes in a more leisurely manner than was usual with foreigners who come to Egypt, we rather startled him by telling him that he could have a few days' vacation similar to the first days after our arrival. We had decided to "do" Thebes over again. We had seen the "sights," and now we wanted to wander and drift about the remains of the old sunshine metropolis hearing no dragoman's voice reciting history and urging us on to the next "point of interest." At last we had become intoxicated by Egyptian sunbeams and the magic of Old Nile. Tomorrow would do for the start up the river; and tomorrow's tomorrow. So we stayed on and on, and when we knew that the time for our departure was approaching, we congratulated Josef. Here had been the "object of all travel," which poor old insular Dr. Johnson believed was the

Mediterranean, and we were satisfied. Josef had planned it wisely, after all. Nothing, we declared, could equal the splendour of Thebes.

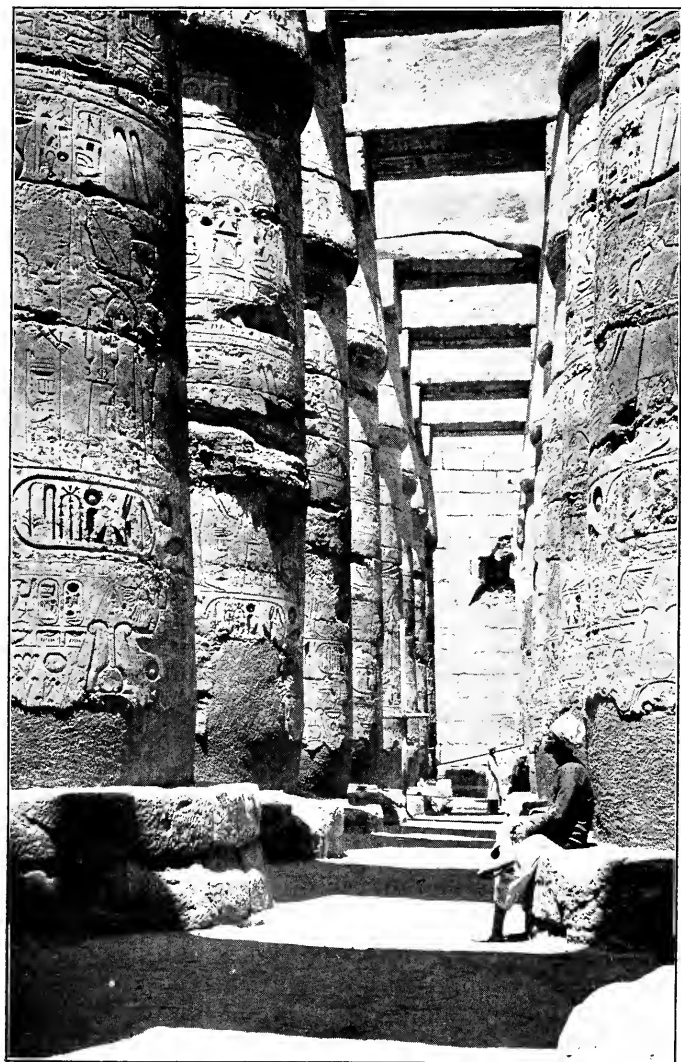
“But Philæ remains,” he corrected.

“There cannot be more than one Thebes in the world,” we replied, “a sphere such as our earth could not have but one metropolis like this. We know that everything else must have less interest to the visitor.”

“And Cairo remains,” said Josef.

But while we had learned from experience that Josef “knows best,” we held to our individual opinions.

Ancient Thebes stood on both sides of the great river. Its founder's name is lost in the maze of antiquity. Diodorus and others have declared that it was the most ancient city of Egypt, the belief being that like Memphis, of which so little now remains, it was founded by Menes, who according to the tablet of Abydos, which gives the names of seventy-six dynastic kings, was the first human ruler of the land. Whether or not it be entitled to this distinction, it is assuredly one of the most ancient, as is proved by the recent work of Mr. Georges Legrain, whom we saw busily directing a group of natives who seemed to be more active in the direction of restoration than excavation. Le-



INTERIOR OF TEMPLE, KARNAK.



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grain has found that the temple of Karnak of the eighteenth dynasty, stood upon the remains of the temple of the eleventh and twelfth dynasties and that this in turn covered the site of a temple of the second dynasty, and the hope is entertained that he may yet prove, what is said to be his belief, that this early structure stood upon the ruins of a temple to some god of the pre-dynastic period, when the mists were barely rolling away from the face of the earth. The same custom, however, obtains today, throughout the land of Egypt. Often enough the mosque is built on the site of a Christian sanctuary, which was in turn built upon the ruins of a pagan house of worship. When a mud village crumbles and falls, the builders of the new are likely to erect their structures upon the ruins of the old. When comparatively recent excavations brought the temple of Denderah to the light, it was first necessary to destroy the mud village perched upon its roof, around which the sand had formed a mound. By his investigations, Legrain has added two thousand years to the positive history of the Karnak monuments, and what he has done here, other men are likely to do at Luxor and across the river.

There is no authentic Egyptian contemporary history of Thebes. It is fairly safe to assume,

however, from the ruins that remain, that the seemingly extravagant writings of ancient historians were rather founded on truth, if they did occasionally seem to drift toward the mythical and legendary. It was the abiding-place of Amen-Ra, the great god of all Egypt, and consequently the city gained a splendour not equaled by any other. The "twenty thousand chariots of war" referred to by Homer, are now believed to have been literally possible. Strabo says the city was nine miles in length, and it is certain from the scattered ruins that this area was covered by mighty structures time seems unable to destroy. It was the city of No referred to in the Hebrew scriptures (Ezekiel xxx:14) and in various cuneiform inscriptions.

Thebes has a charm for the tourist that is not possessed by any of the other shrines further down the river, but even here, as elsewhere, one realizes that he cannot stay on forever, particularly when a dragoman at one's arm seems to be incessantly reminding his charge of the brevity of human life and the short time of it allotted to a tour of Egypt. So finally our day of departure was agreed upon, and as a grand crowning event of our last day, we made an excursion to the tombs of the kings and queens, four miles from the river, away off there beyond the great



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hill of stone that forms the western background of the ancient city. And if other days in Thebes had aroused our emotions, they were as nothing compared to this ride around and over the hill which seems almost to groan beneath its weight of memories. Along this path had passed great national processions of splendour, as one by one the rulers of mighty Egypt were carried to their last resting-places, which they had carved for themselves as fitting abodes until that last day when they would live again. The rock-tombs, built in the most spectacular day of Theban glory, are unlike all others in Egypt. As the Danish prince remarked of his father, "there was a man," here were fitting abodes for mighty kings of a mighty people. Let the guidebooks describe them in detail. We prowled into many of these gaudily painted and deserted caverns, and found one as interesting as another. Each left us speechless in wonder, although we thought that we could never marvel at anything after we had inspected the corpse of Thebes on the yellow sands beside the river.

But as before, retrospection seemed to be the most wonderful part of all. When we were again adrift on the Nile, I thought most of that last Theban day, and not of the blue granite bust of Rameses lying prone in the sand, not of the

gentlemen of Memnon in the wheat fields with the fellaheen toiling at the bases of their colossal chairs, not of the lotus-capped pillars of Karnak and Luxor and ceased trying to reconstruct a picture of the Thebes of the past. I could not forget those last moments, for over there behind the hill I had a private interview with a king of Egypt, one of the mightiest of the clan. After all, that was my last memory of Thebes, for it was the first time that I had been permitted to sit down in a chamber all alone with royalty. And, needless to say, I was very much impressed by the experience. I had been told that kings were very much like other human beings, that most of them came to their lofty stations by happenings of birth and that they were subject to all the thrills, joys, sorrows and emotions of other men. I had been told that there was little about them to suggest that they were not exactly like their lowliest subjects—and the few specimens of king that I have seen rather favoured this report. But I did not call upon one of the garden variety of king, one of them who stalk around and pretend to be rulers of men, while in reality men make their own laws and seem to retain kings as a sort of courtesy to ancient custom. He was “every inch a king”—a man who made his own laws and executed them, one who

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raised his hand and the earth trembled, one who gave the signal and a nation dashed by in war chariots to annihilate another nation—a builder of temples, cities and tombs that were designed to endure for five thousand years. This was a king worth seeing!

And yet he seemed to be a modest gentleman, with a firm upper lip of determination, the protruding jaw of perseverance and features over which a smile seemed to play as I sat alone with him in his lavishly embellished audience chamber. Perhaps he was not so retiring in disposition once upon a time. Paintings and carvings depict him as holding his enemies in a bunch by the hair of the head, and when he drove out in his chariot, the vanquished fell beneath his wheels. But, as before noted, he is no upstart pretender to royal honours. Amenophis had been in his tomb for centuries when Rome was founded. He reigned while the Israelites were still in bondage in Egypt. And such a tomb as he built for himself! It is far in the interior of the mountain, carved out of the solid rock, and its great chambers, which seem to echo and proclaim one's footsteps a desecration, also proclaim his greatness. He is shown slaying seven Syrian chiefs at one time with his own hand. There was no feat too extravagant for him to

record as his own. But perhaps that is a mortal weakness from which the world has not recovered, although we have had centuries of "civilizing" influence since Amenophis lived. And he alone, of the tribes of kings of ancient Egypt, has been left where he was laid when death overtook him, or at least he alone of those tribes that have been found in their hiding-places by the hordes of robbers who have infested Egypt, since long before Amenophis lived, for kings themselves were not above robbing the tombs of their predecessors. Gold was rare then, as it is rare now. Sapphires were precious as they are today. Sentiment in such matters is modern. There was a day when might was right.

It was a long donkey ride out there to the reception chamber of Amenophis, and the path most of the way was through the rocky gorge of limestone mountains that seemed to be pink in the rosy morning sunlight. When we arrived, we found that the other royalty had departed for the Museum at Cairo, but Amenophis was here, and it seemed particularly fitting that His Majesty should have been left in his palace. People who see him must come a long way to gaze on his face. Over his head "in season" shines an electric light, and the curious stand

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back in a little gallery near the last chamber of the tomb, while the Egyptian watchman touches a button. The light flashes, and the profane starers of the agencies are satisfied. The king does not appear to care, however, and lies there calmly in his electric brilliancy, making the calm dignity of his features even more marked. Here was a king worthy of the name, and time plays no part in his greatness.

But when I arrived, the "season" was over and there was no electricity. When I dismounted in front of the big square opening and decline into the side of the mountain, the guard "regretted" that I would not have a good look at His Majesty, but a letter from M. Maspero, considered by many to be the leading Egyptologist of the world, quickly solved the problem. The guard lit a tray of candles and unlocked the iron door which clicks back and forth on its squeaky hinges, where stones that men scarcely know how to move today, were piled up to assure privacy to Amenophis. The letter from Maspero acted as magic, and when I informed the guard that I would like to climb over the railing and sit alone beside the king for a time, he smiled, but readily consented to permit me to do so, and he went over into the pit ahead of me and placed the candles along the rim of the sarcoph-

agus so that Amenophis and I might see one another during my audience.

In the meantime he wandered away, perhaps amusing himself by looking at the paintings on the walls of the tomb's various chambers, and, in the comparatively dim light, the thought came to me that he might forget that I was there—he might forget to come back and get me! He might go away and attend to his own affairs. He had broken one rule and permitted me to go in beside the king. One so lax of duty might forget anything else. Or the solid stone walls to the last chamber might fall with a crash. They have stood for thousands of years, but everything has its end, and what if this were to be mine! Just then I looked again at the calm and reassuring features of the king and I did not care! Perhaps a mummy with exactly such an expression has never been found. He is wrapped in his funeral garments and the garlands that were laid upon him by his family and loyal subjects three thousand years ago—perhaps much more—are still there. The paintings that he caused to be placed upon his palace walls have retained their brilliancy and outline. They record his deeds of daring and his triumphs. Great in life he wanted to be great in death, and he is great, even sublime. Who

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would fear to be forever with such a man? But after a while, the guard came back and began to explain the pictures in the tomb. At the moment it seemed to be an intrusion, for the king had not called him; but perhaps he thought that it was time for my audience to end.

It has been said that the Egyptians must have been the most immoral people in the world a few thousand years ago, for they alone of all people decorated their tombs with reproductions of the gay as well as the somber moments of their lives. They did not hesitate to bring here the troupes of dancing girls who had helped to make them merry in life. The girls frolic and cavort about in most inappropriate fashion, but doubtless the king had enjoyed their antics while he was alive and he did not want to be lonesome through the long eternity. And, besides, it is difficult for us to judge of the morals of three thousand years ago, when we see that geography plays such an important part in the morals of the present. The Egyptian girl, who would not dare to show her face on the street, smokes innumerable cigarettes and considers her American sister a shameless hussy, while the majority of American girls do not exactly smile upon the cigarette habit for women. "East is East and West is West"—morally as well as physically.

It is impossible to convey an adequate impression of the tomb of Amenophis. From a stairway and square door one enters into a series of large and small chambers and passages—all chiseled out of the solid rock, and each a little more descending than the one before it, sometimes falling off steeply, so that it would be difficult to descend but for the unevenly cut rock. And straight ahead there is a deep well which must be passed at the side, for the sly old fox designed this well as a trap in which to catch the desecrators of his tomb. Far down under the earth one passes by many walls bright with mural paintings. The king is depicted as passing through the underworld in the sunboat, guarded by two large snakes. Also on the walls down the steep inclines are reproductions of the sarcophagus taking its long slide into the eternal rock. It reaches the last chamber and the king is judged. Probably he had his "judgment" painted before his death, and he gave himself eternal life. All of these ancient men seemed to be thinking so much about immortality that they felt they could not afford to spend too much time thinking of the present. When a man became a king, he began to erect or chisel his tomb. What was loved in life he wanted close at hand after life was over, and he ran no chances but



directed that they be placed where he wanted them, so that he might see them with his own eyes. It was something of a shock when the dragoman told us the other day that the Egyptologists and scientists believe that these great kings and rulers lived in mud houses, as their descendants do today, and thought only of the hereafter when they were building their temples and tombs. In all Egypt, I believe, there remains but one ancient and authenticated royal palace of stone—and that is attached to a temple. The present was nothing; what counted was the great unknown future—immortality.

Amenophis seems to have gained his wish. Three thousand years have left his features as finely cut as when he was placed in the tomb.

“Meester know name of his donkey?” grinningly asked the donkey boy as I emerged from the tomb-palace, my thoughts still on the great king I had visited.

“Teddy Roos-felt,” snorted the youngster. If I had been a German, the donkey’s name would have been “Kaiser Wilhelm.”

And then it was no use trying. Every time I tried to think of Amenophis on the backward journey in the foothills, “Teddy Roos-felt” stumbled or shied at something and made me think of him. All of which proves that Shake-

speare was right, there's something in a name, and I was obliged to wait until we were back on the "Seti" before I could appreciate how much I should think of my "audience" with a king of Egypt in the days that were to come.

## CHAPTER XI

### IN THE GOLDEN WASTE

**F**ROM the time the First Cataract is reached at Assuan, the Nile and its surrounding landscape take on such forms that one believes himself floating on other waters. The banks are lined with great granite cliffs, where the ancient kings sent their slaves to get the material for their eternal monuments further down the river, and big blue and black granite boulders constantly protrude their heads above the river, when, as now, the river is low. It is difficult to think of this stream as the home of the lotus, papyrus and the crocodile, all forms of life which one associates with low, sluggish streams and stagnant marshes where fever lurks and where vegetation forms a green scum over the face of the waters. Instead, there are rapids where the waters are lashed into white foam, now, of course, greatly diminished by the great dam, but visible all the same, and demanding good seamanship from the reis and pilot, whose task had seemed to be one of guesswork when

the dahabiyeh was being steered around mudbanks and the sandbars of lower Egypt—or striking them which seemed to be as often the case. The water swirls, and there are little whirlpools which remind one of some miles below Niagara—although, of course, upon a much smaller scale. But it seems miraculous sometimes, when the little boat would be sent to the bottom if it touched them. All here is rock and desert. The little land that once lay along the base of the cliffs, as in lower and upper Egypt, is now covered by the water that is thrown back from the dam. It is all restlessness and confusion where once had been calm. The river—the rocks, the desert, all in endless procession from Assuan to the big rock temple of Abou Simbel, and, even then, there is little vegetation below the Second Cataract at Wady-Halfa, where the railroad starts for Khartoum.

There is no railroad between Assuan and Wady. Transportation is either by water along the treacherous and historic river or by caravan in the desert beyond. Here is one of the unconnected links in that monster railroad system that will connect Cairo with the Cape, and it is one of the links that will cause the engineers much trouble and entail great expense upon the builders, for while the swamps of equatorial

Africa seem to be throwing out an almost impenetrable barrier against the intrusion of the railway and its builders, much tunneling and many difficulties are met with in Nubia that cause the surveyor's heart to sink.

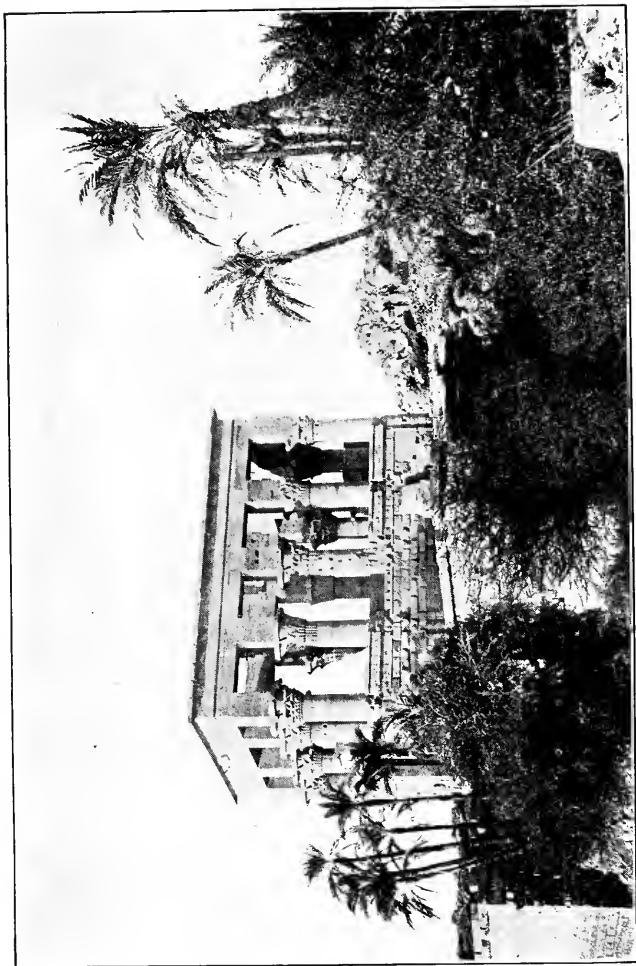
Safely through the locks at Assuan, however, where the little boat is carried skyward between granite channels, one feels quickly repaid for the rather strenuous experience met with in twistings and turnings among the granite "hard heads," which raise their black heads as if in defiance. Even upon these eternal rocks are cut deeply the cartouches of ancient kings, and there are other inscriptions which prove that the difficult passage must have been made by men in boats at a time when the world's civilization was in its crudest beginnings elsewhere. There are markings on the rocks which show Nubia to have been the most ancient of men's trails for gold and slaves. And it is interesting to observe that great blocks of granite were taken from the parent cliffs, hewn and polished—and sometimes carved—for shipment to Egypt, but never started on their perilous voyage down the Nile. Huge monoliths had been cut and brought to the river's edge, awaiting the big transports or barges, but the barges and transports never came. Perhaps the king's

attention was turned to warfare. Perhaps he suddenly organized expeditions that required the services of his vassals and slaves. Or perhaps he was slain and his successors cared not for completing his ambitious schemes of beautification.

The monuments and pillars are mute, but the Nile voyager sits upon the deck of his dahabiyeh in the dead stillness and constructs these romances and tragedies of the ancient world for himself. There is none to contradict him, and by the time he reaches Assuan he is ready to believe that anything he can imagine is not beyond the range of possibility.

As we turned a curve in the river, an amazing sight greeted our eyes—one of the greatest sights in all the world—as if the lights in the theater had been suddenly extinguished and the curtain had suddenly risen upon a picture which we had waited since childhood to see.

Here was Philæ! Here was the temple of Isis, and not far away was “Pharaoh’s Bed,” that unfinished temple of great pillars and massive roof of huge stones, so beautifully carved and constructed that it gives the impression of being a toy-castle of reeds or lace, or a delicately sawed piece of sandalwood, like the spokes in an Oriental fan. After our boat was tied up to the



“ PHARAOH'S BED.”





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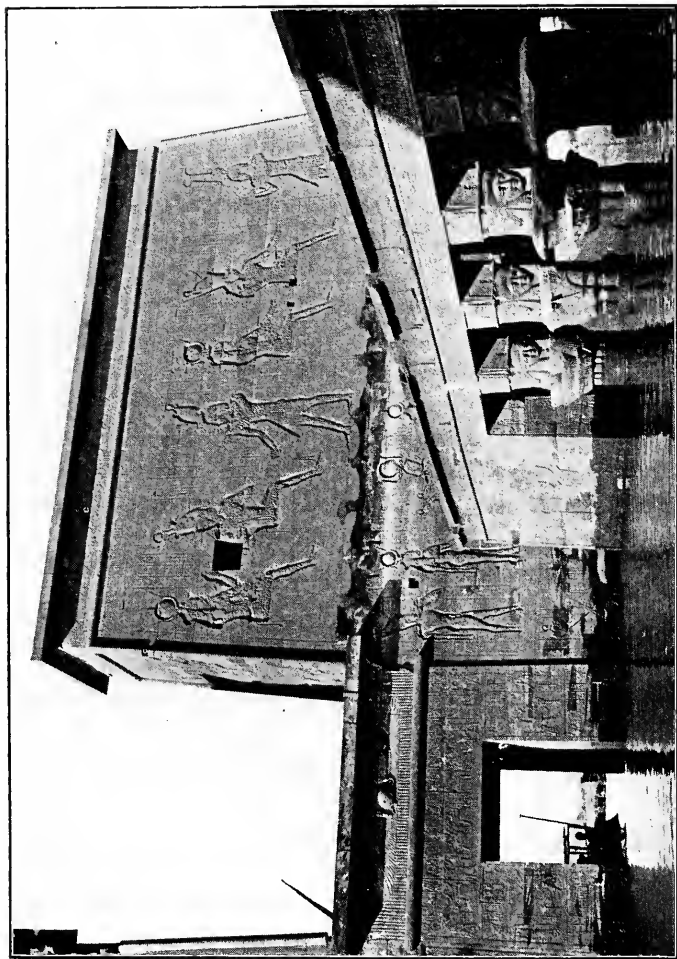
bank, a felucca, the name given to the gondola-like boat with six rowers at Philæ, came alongside, to take us to the temple for our visit, for this, unlike the others which we had visited, is in the water. The dam at Assuan has raised the current over its foundations and the waves now swirl into the sanctuaries where processions of priests once walked. The stream seems to flow almost laughingly and mockingly into the structure. The temples seem to be floating, only they do not move. Here is fairyland—and a fairyland that has endured for so many centuries that man has almost lost the reckoning. But now the water is causing the inevitable decay. It is creeping upward on the majestic pillars, causing them to look like a beautiful woman whose face is now stricken with a terrible disease of decay. Some day, when the other temples still rise to their original heights in the sun of the parched plains, Philæ will have tottered over into the water and pass forever from the sight of man. The paintings and mural decorations are already showing signs of decay, and the green fungus of the Nile is slowly spreading its moldy form over gesticulating figures that seem almost to realize what is happening to them. Soon they must fall beneath the water—soon pass from the minds of the living.

The felucca is rowed into the entrance of the temple and makes its way slowly through the gloomy courts and chapels. This seems to be the worst desecration of all—but man must have the Nile water and the dam conserved it for his use. Food for men is more important than ancient temples. Therefore, poor Philæ proudly raises its head, but that head wears a look of despair.

We lingered long amid these surroundings. There was no desire to go on, for we wanted to see the beautiful spectacle from every point of view. So we went ashore and sat on huge pillars of granite, now lying prostrate, our feet resting on slabs of stone that bore inscriptions in those strange characters, only few of which are decipherable to any but the student.

As I sat there, as if he had risen from the yellow sand of the desert, there came a man with handfuls of sand, which he permitted to sail away in the wind through his fingers, as he talked. He seemed to be scattering gold—but instead he was looking for silver.

“Meester, he want his fortune?” he asked, and I did not understand at first, but afterward he explained that he was a sand diviner—he told fortunes with the golden sand—and, afterward, the dragoman told me that this man has a repu-



PHILÆ TEMPLE, SHOWING WATERS CAUSED BY THE ASSUAN DAM.



tation that extends far into the desert. Here, at last, was the genuine article, and not one of those fake fortune-tellers who haunt the sandy spots of Egypt much frequented by tourists.

So he was engaged, and we settled down in the sand for a "seance." The shilling that I gave him was buried in the sand, and various incantations were said over it, the diviner passing his hands over it as the mesmerist passes his hands when placing a subject under control. Then with the spot as a center, he drew a five-pointed star in the sand and sat back and was silent. Suddenly he sat upright, and in broken English talked so rapidly that he was difficult to understand, evidently wishing to convey the impression that it had all come to his mind in a flash. He told me how old I was to the day, that I lived in a foreign country, in a city by a body of water, how many persons usually sat at table with me at home, their ages, their height and their complexions, respectively, and he told me other things about friends and associates—and he located and described them to a nicety, everything excepting calling their names. It was all quite uncanny and mystifying. One would naturally say that he was "probably a glib talker and happened to strike the truth," but the surprising part of it to me was that in all his talk he

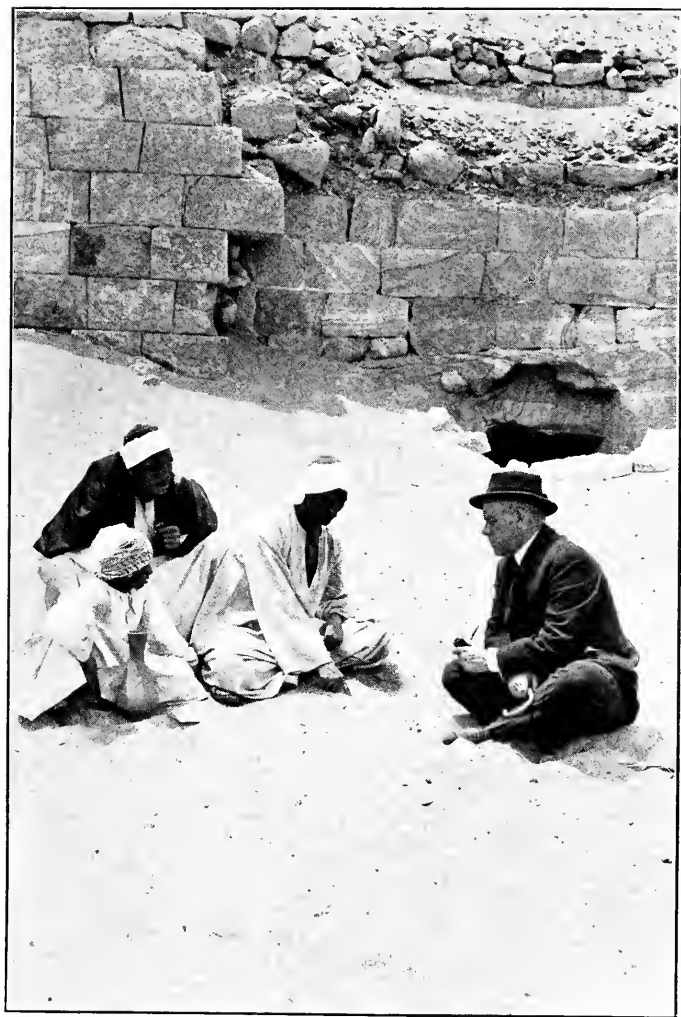
made no mistakes. It wasn't exactly a "fortune," for he gave no advice, excepting to "beware of real estate investments"—which seemed quite unnecessary and sarcastic. And, when he had finished, quite without ceremony, he dug his hand deep into the sand, pulled out the shilling and went his way.

After awhile the felucca boys came back and took me from my granite perch by the shore. They were singing a song that was in a deeper minor key but suggested a few phrases of the Italian "La Paloma."

"It is about a lady in Nubia they are singing," interpreted the reis.

I had heard that these boys could improvise songs, so I asked him to have them do so. While the result was rather confusing, it was interesting to hear them. They intoned something that they called a song, but sounded as if each were trying to make more noise than the other. It was about an aeroplane. "If a nail comes out it falls to the ground," interpreted the reis, and he explained that a French aviator had made the trip through the air from Cairo to Khartoum and had met with an accident near Philæ that gave them the subject for their "topical song."

Then, at the close, these Nubian youngsters, who were unable to speak any English words,



SAND DIVINER TELLING A FORTUNE.





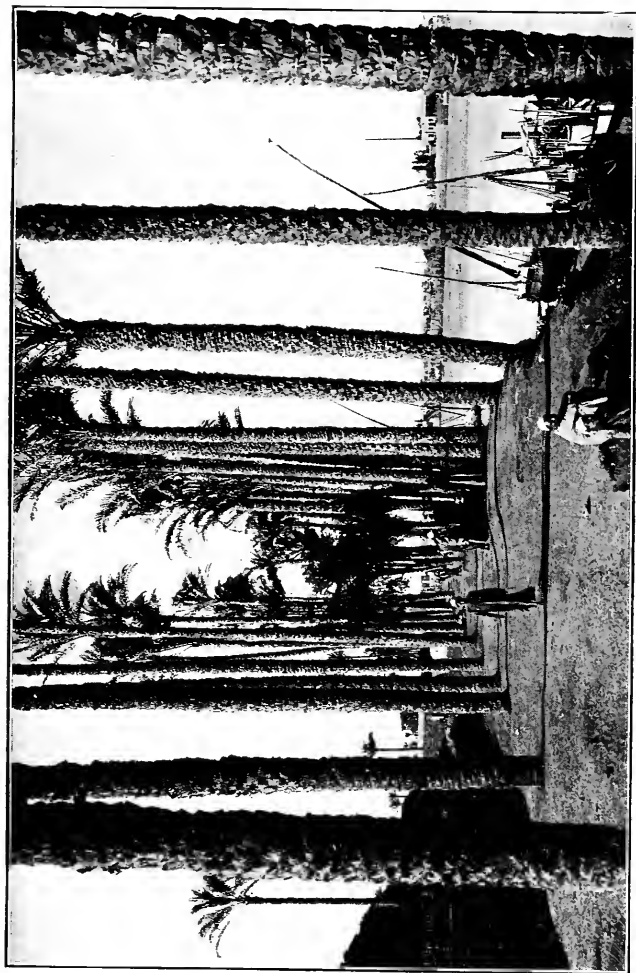
beyond those which they had learned parrotlike, stood up and recited a jingle which some tourist had taught them. It was: "Very good, very nice, hip, hip, hooray, thank you, thank you." They intoned the words as if they were chanting, and in a key attempting unison, that made it seem verily that the time had come for Philæ to fall into the river.

But Philæ did not fall, for it had often heard the same noises, and Philæ had not fallen many days later when we greeted "Pharaoh's Bed" and the shrine of Isis on our passage down the river toward Cairo.

Often we wished that we had lingered longer around Philæ's shores, the very soil of which was once so sacred that only the feet of priests and royalty might touch it, for when we came again we reproached ourselves with the belief that we had become genuine "tourists to Egypt." We were flying along as fast as a dahabiyeh and the current of the stream could carry us. There were dozens of places visited on the upward voyage that we hoped to see again when we left them; but there was only one way out of the dilemma. Each one of us had particular places in mind, and, strangely enough, nobody's list corresponded to any one else's list. One who decided that a single visit

to Abydos would be necessary, seemed to feel an imperative call toward the stately pile at Edfu; but the other felt that in view of the delay in a certain schedule that our dragoman had arranged, we could easily dispense with another visit to Edfu, if we spent another day or two at Karnak. So we arrived at the conclusion that the program best suited to our collective desires, was to point the dahabiyeh northward at Wady-Halfa and permit it to drift lazily around the thousands of curves that would one day bring us back to the clump of palms by Old Cairo, whence we started.

But I think that we regretted passing Philæ without stopping, more than any other place. Perhaps our feelings were tempered by sympathy, which, after all, is akin to admiration. The other monuments of Egypt seem to be so defiant of time and the elements. Man and races of men appear and depart, but they continue to stand, gleaming in the sunlight. But poor Philæ seems to sit with bowed head. Man has discovered a destructive agency even in this land of eternity, and of all places on earth where man's requirements seemed to be a dam that would water the sands this perhaps should have been the last. Yet Philæ was the victim, and obliged to pay with her life that men might live.



PALM TREES ON THE BANK OF THE NILE.



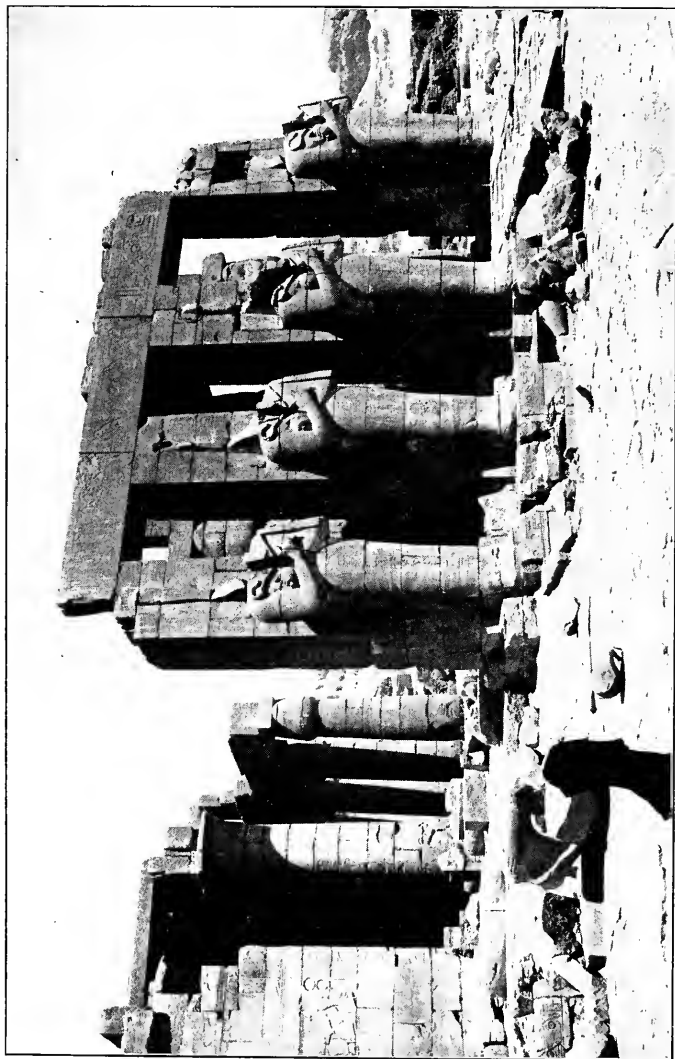
Philæ must pass away. Some fortunate chance might bring us again to Egypt many years from now, and we knew that the other stately piles that were standing long before the beginning of our era would be still standing, erect and defiant. They would be there when our children and children's children make their voyages to Egypt. But with Philæ it would be quite another story, and we gazed upon its sacred face as friends take their final look at the dead.

Excepting to one who likes to bathe himself in the sunshine of Nubia, the Nile voyage above Philæ is rather disappointing and dreary by comparison with the passage of the lower river. At the Second Cataract there is Wady-Halfa, a half modern city of no interest to an Egyptian voyager beyond the fact that here may be observed a further blending of the races and racial colours and characteristics. One may like to visit a native market here, invest in the "genuine" Abyssinian and Sudanese relics that are offered by every street beggar encountered. It is even possible to make oneself believe that he is making "bargains" in ostrich feathers and pretty bead-work, some of which is made in Nubia and some of which has made a long voyage from Germany. But one usually finds that it is better to purchase ostrich feathers at home;

better to confine souvenir purchases to a few scarabs, which are likelier to be genuine if purchased in Cairo.

“Wady,” as it is commonly known in this part of the world, has a few temple ruins and several points of interest to the thorough tourist. It was once an outpost of empire and bears many traces of ancient civilization; but these have been noticed all along the river in recent days, even if they do not assume the grandeur of others not so remote. One may go out into what seems to be the desert and find himself in a castor-oil plantation, and one sees many natives who seem to have been bathed in the product of that plant which here assumes the proportion of a tree. There is an interesting and constantly changing scene along the river front, for Wady is an important shipping point for Nile boats, and everything seems to be done in as primitive fashion as in that day when a king residing at Thebes sent his army to collect tribute from the people of the golden soil.

We had but one stopping-place between Philæ and Wady that will be retained in memory as in after days we think of our Nile voyage and its principal incidents. The other days were given over to that intoxicating floating on calm waters that although one feels abashed at the admission



TEMPLE OF ABU SIMBEL.





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afterwards, becomes little more than night's repose and days of continued siestas.

One night we moored the dahabiyeh at the feet of four gigantic gentlemen of stone, or more correctly, perhaps, at the feet of four colossal stone images of the same gentleman. We were at the wonderful temple of Abu Simbel. Old Rameses II did not intend that his praises should go unsung even in Nubia, nor that any of his brilliant deeds should go unrecorded. So in commemoration of his victory in Syria, he built the largest and finest monument in Nubia. Perhaps in Egypt there is nothing on a more gigantic scale, nothing more stupendous in conception and brilliant in execution; but compared to some of the lacy structures we have recently seen this temple impresses us as being merely awe-inspiring and gigantic. It lacks much of that intimacy possessed by so many of the others. It has not that compelling capacity for provoking thoughts of the past. One sees it as he might look at Brooklyn bridge or a forty-story skyscraper. One admires the originator of the idea and the mentality that brought it to accomplishment, just as one observes with pleasure the man who can juggle cannon balls or balance feathers on his nose. It was an achievement that makes man proud that it was built by crea-

tures of a similar species. But it is cold and unresponsive, and perhaps it has appeared to be so to men long before us, for while it was doubtless built in the midst of a large community, it stands quite deserted today, unless the sellers of souvenirs know that tourists are coming, when they seem to spring up from the sands, laden with the spurious and the curious, mostly the former.

There are in reality two temples at Abu Simbel, but the lesser one which was dedicated to Hathor by Rameses and his wife does not detain travelers long. The real object of interest is the Great Temple, which is hewn out of the rock to a depth of one hundred and eighty-five feet, and the surface of the rock, which probably originally sloped down to the river, was cut away for about ninety square feet to form the front which is ornamented with the four colossal statues which are seated on thrones and appear to be detached from the rock but are a part of it. The statues themselves are about sixty-six feet in height.

Travelers arrange to be at Abu Simbel in the morning, and we were no exceptions. It is then that the sun flames through the massive portal, over which there is a figure of the hawk-headed god twenty feet high, and lights the inner

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chamber of the great sanctuary as it will not be lighted again until another dawning. The massive hall inside is supported by eight pillars and the sides are covered with series of paintings depicting the exploits of Rameses. Truly Rameses was a wonderful man even at twenty-three, for he is seen here disdaining all advice and plunging into the midst of the enemy in his chariot of war and slaying them by hundreds, single-handed. There are wonderful tales related on these walls, and the scholars have been able to translate all of them, as they relate to the leading gentleman of Egypt.


We felt no keen regrets as we left Abu Simbel at noon, however, for we knew that we would see plenty of portraits in granite of the great monarch again, even behold the mummy of the man himself, and some way, one does not feel in regard to him as a thoughtful traveler must feel when he sees the other mummies of Egypt's kings.

They spent their lives preparing a place where after death they would be safe from the eye of man, but man has pried in upon their solitude, disturbed their sleep and exposed them to the rude stares and comments of the thoughtless tribes of the world. Rameses II prepared his hiding-place as did the others. Perhaps he

could not have departed far enough from the custom to have done otherwise. Still, however, one imagines that the sublime old egotist and prince of advertisers would have felt no regret if he could have known how men of other nations cross the seas to gaze upon his works in these latter days, and how they stand before his prostrate body in awe. Perhaps he can see what is transpiring, and, if this be possible, one cannot conceive of a greater joy than would be his, knowing that the world has wheeled on for centuries since they laid him in his tomb, yet he remains, and Egypt is littered with the monuments which he caused to be erected in his own honour, that the puny men of the present may still admire.

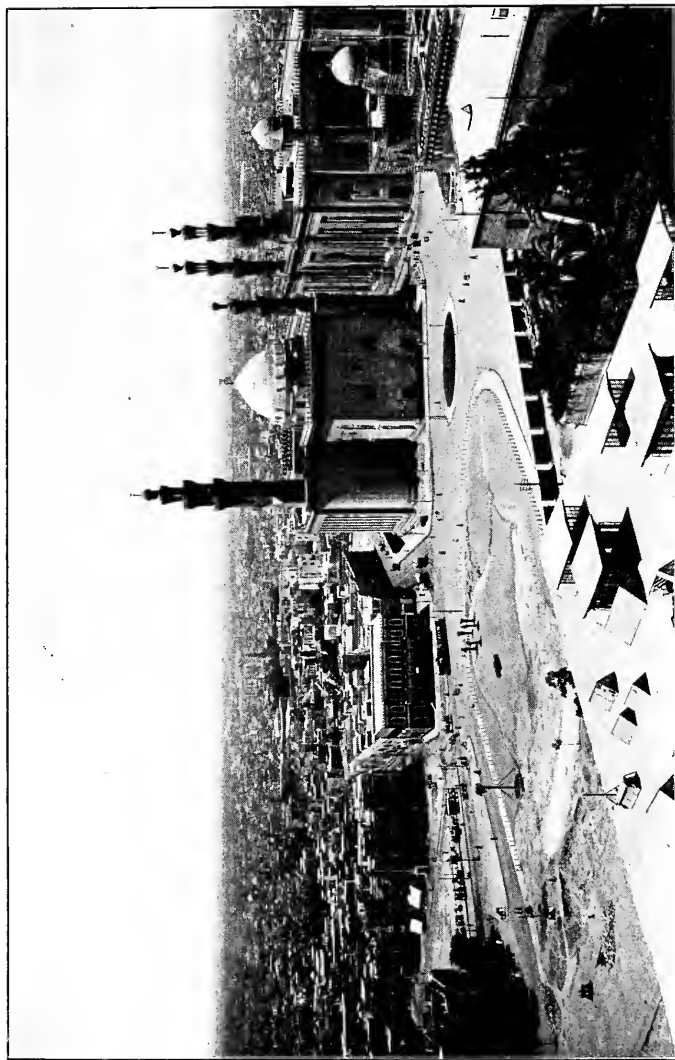
## CHAPTER XII

### WHERE EAST MEETS WEST

HE khedival capital city is "Egypt" to most of the travelers who come to the land of the Pharaohs in season. Some of the fashionables venture up the Nile for a glance at the temples and tombs, but the tourist agencies say that they have a difficult time of it to entice the majority of their trade up country, and they offer all sorts of accommodations to encourage the "luxury" of Nile travel, incidentally conveying the impression that they are really selling the river, instead of merely issuing a ticket for one to ride on a boat upon it. The majority of people settle down in one of the fashionable and expensive hotels in Cairo and soon become so fascinated by the city that they decide to stay where they can "enjoy all the comforts of home," and still when venturing to the street behold all the glare and glitter of Oriental life. For, although it may seem trite, Cairo is the meeting-place of the East and the West. No other city in the world is so cosmopolitan, and

none is likely to wrest from it its distinguishing honour. In Cairo it is possible for the Hindu to live as he lives at home, eat the food that he is used to eating, and here he may wear the clothing that he wears on his native streets, without exciting even a casual glance from passers-by; and the same thing is true of the American or Persian, Englishman or Afghanistanee, Italian or Sumatran, Greek or Norwegian. Here is the largest city of the Arab world, and it is a metropolis worthy of the name.

All the nations of the world come and go through Cairo. Sit on the terrace of Shepheard's at tea time and one will see more nationalities in an hour and hear more of a Babel of tongues than he had previously believed existed in all the world. They walk and they drive and nobody seems to understand the language of any one else—excepting the black boy in the hotels, who serves as a sort of general interpreter. He seems to speak every language under the sun and he rarely makes a mistake when first addressing a newcomer. He can tell from the "looks," this fellow with little silver rings in the top lobes of his ears, and he must patiently hear the complaints of men as widely different in nationality and language as the waters of the sea; but he seems to know how to



CAIRO, FROM THE CITADEL.





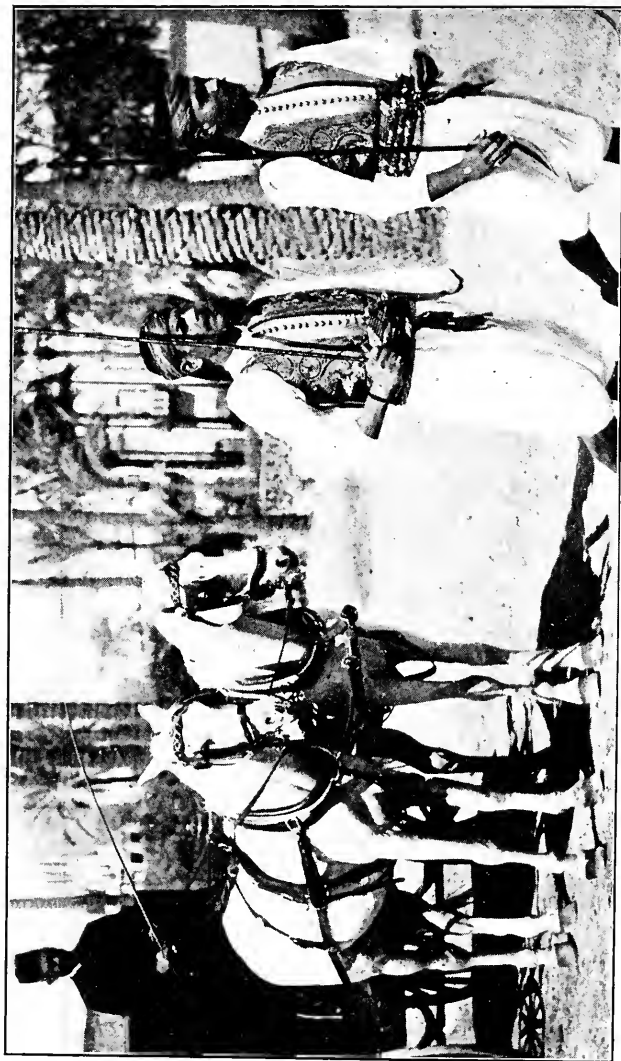
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understand, or pretend to understand, and he takes it that he must administer to the ease and comfort of every one.

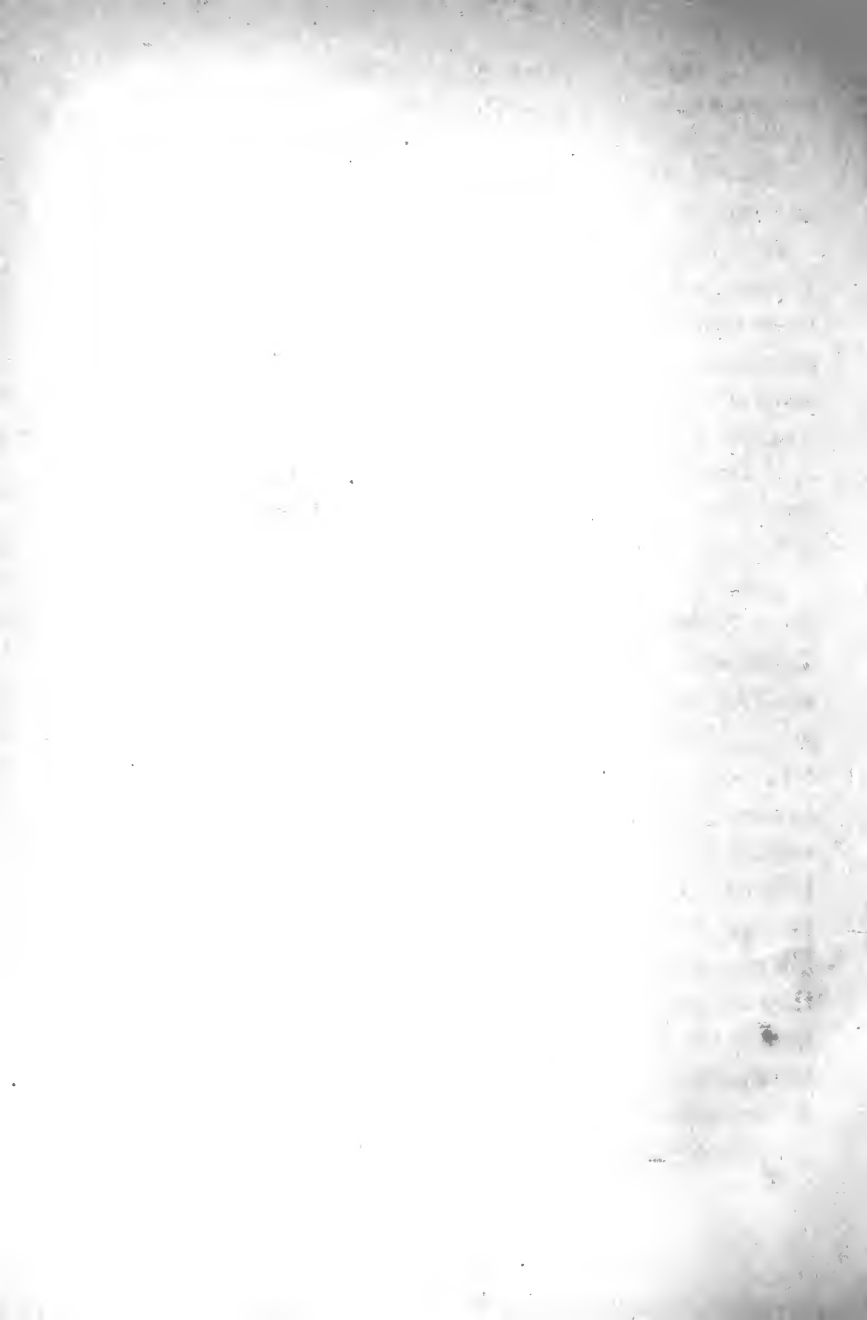
Perhaps it is chiefly this ease and comfort that attracts the world to Cairo. Instinctively, the world likes to be waited upon, and if there is a place under the sun where more menial tasks are performed for the human beings who have the money to pay for "service," I have never heard of it. Where else would one find black boys perched beside European ladies, swishing the flies away from them as they sit indolently in reclining chairs and do not wish to venture to perform the exertion for themselves? Where else on earth would a man who rode a horse have a boy to go behind it, at the pace chosen by the man, for the purpose of doing the whipping or the "whoa-ing"? In Egypt it might take too much of a gentleman's strength to use a spur or wave a whip, so he has a servant to perform the task for him. I saw a perfectly healthy man dressed in European clothes, but whose complexion proved that he was a native, strutting along the highway, followed not three feet behind by a black pigmy or dwarf, who was dressed in a giddy uniform of red muslin and gold braid. The little fellow had a hard time of it to keep up with his master, and it took some toddling for his

short legs, but when the gentleman stopped to speak to a friend, he took off his tarboosh, handed it to the dwarf to hold, and the little fellow handed him a big handkerchief to wipe off his perspiring forehead. Verily, I believe that if the brown gentleman had come to a rut in the pavement, the little black man would have been expected to prostrate himself and fill it, so that his master might have stepped upon his body and saved some exertion.

Some of these things seem very absurd to the newcomer, but perhaps they are "necessary." At least that is the answer I have had when I ventured any opinion of these things which appeared to be strange to my eyes. It is not wise for a stranger to criticize anything in a strange land. Likely as not, a forty-eight hour visit will convince him of his folly. The lady of Cairo who rides out in her carriage is preceded by her "seis" or two of them, although this custom is not considered so "smart" as formerly. They are usually dressed in resplendent costumes, and look "showy" as they run along to clear the way for the horses. Whether or not milady is a humanitarian and is afraid that her horses' hoofs may trample upon poor barefooted pedestrians in the narrow streets, I am unable to say; but I rather believe, after observing many of



“ SEIS ” PRECEDING A CARRIAGE, CAIRO.



these turnouts, that much more thought is directed to whether there will be a delay to the carriage in the crowded streets.

In Cairo the khedive rides out daily in a French automobile, and many of the aristocracy have adopted the new style machine which goes skimming along the highways; but the beautiful span of Arab horses, the screened carriage, the flashily attired seis, coachman and eunuch are still preferred by the socially elect—and some way they seem to fit in better with one's preconceived ideas of what Cairo ought to be.

Automobiles and camels! They enter and cross Cairo, side by side, just as the East meets West in the Ezbekiyah. The girl from Montana touches elbows with the gentleman from Abyssinia. But everything here seems to have been "fused." On the surface of things, black, brown, yellow and white men seem to be social equals in Cairo. The whites, who are always talking about being "particular" at home, soon become so that they do not mind it here. It is all so quiet, so sublimely easy and comfortable, that men learn to forget their little prejudices, and if they have a cool drink, a servant to fan them, a wicker chair and a palm-tree's shade, or, better still, the thick green of a mimosa or banyan, they forget everything, and at least imagine

that they are satisfied. They care not whether there be a ruined temple at Abydos. Let the antiquarians take care of that! They care not whether or not Amenophis still sleeps in his tomb at Thebes. There are enough people to journey up there to see an old mummy in a hole in the ground. Cairo is Egypt for them, and for a large number of people who travel this way.

We returned to Cairo early one Sunday morning when the city was still asleep—if Cairo may be said ever to go to sleep. We watched it begin to rise, and best of all, we had arrived in Cairo on a holiday, for while Egypt is a Mohammedan country, nominally, where the sabbath falls on Friday, the English governors seem to have turned the Christian sabbath into a weekly holiday for the natives. Most of the stores and places of business are closed on that day and the population seems to take to its favourite sports. As the day progressed and then declined into evening, we saw the motley throng making merry in its several ways—and it was a sight never to be forgotten. Orientals hate to work, and see nothing to be gained from work. They love to play, and are so easily amused that one marvels at them in their enthusiasm over a game of dominoes, checkers, or even a promenade. Best of all, they seem to love to sit by the hour and

talk. If some one is present to talk back, all right and good; but if not, they sit just the same and seem to be just as happy.

In common with other observers I have spoken of the apparent fusing of the races in the city on the Nile, but this fusing process is merely on the surface. Egypt and the Western world which comes here to pay a visit, are as different as black and white. The history of the Egyptians has been that, crush them and conquer them repeatedly, make their government repeatedly what you will, you cannot change the people. They are different in all essentials from the people who come within their gates. They are gentle and tolerant, but they assume this manner either because they have good manners and recognize their position in the world, or they are not yet ready to act differently; but they are people with little in common with Europeans and they do not care to approach the similarity. A wide gulf divides them from visitors to whom they are hospitable. There are barriers which the diplomats can never hope to remove. First of all, they are Mohammedans, and their visitors seem to be chiefly from Christian countries. Egyptians are Africans and their guests are not.

But one finds no evidence of knowledge of

these differences in Egypt or in the streets of Cairo. Egyptians step from the pavement to the roadway for visitors to pass. They are humble in service. Once I saw an American put a fez on his head and direct his dragoman to tell some Nile rivermen that he was an English officer and wanted them to back up and let his dahabiyeh over a sandbar, where he might have remained for many hours, owing to the better position of the other boats. They bowed to the inevitable without a word of complaint and poled their boats back down the stream, allowing him to pass, although they may have lost a couple of days in so doing. They are dreamers, but they are also philosophers. Once they ruled the world, and who can tell what may happen in the future?

Cairo is now lighted with electric lights, and automobiles hum around its principal streets. Yet step off one of the principal streets into the bazars or narrow thoroughfares where the people live and it is the Middle Ages, the first century of the Christian era or much older. It is the city of sublime contrasts which is perhaps an explanation of the "spell" that it weaves around its visitors. It is a combination of the oldest and newest—and it has been that for a thousand years.



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Perhaps the first thing that strikes the stranger from the West in the streets of Cairo is that the male population of this metropolis seems to have nothing to do but loiter about, smoke, drink and talk. About half of the central portion of the city seems to be given over to cafés. There are literally thousands of little cane-seated chairs around little marble-topped tables and from shortly after sunrise until nearly midnight there seems to be a "paying business." And the gentlemen here seem to be the men of affairs of Cairo. They are well-dressed, and, on the whole, are very good-looking citizens, but they have an air of indolent indifference that is wholly foreign to our way of doing things. Some of them read papers, and others sit as if half asleep and dream. In front of most of the places of business of all sorts these chairs and tables and occupants of them will be found. There may be no café for half a block, but waiters come running when a newcomer arrives, and the speed with which they serve is about the only fast moving thing I have seen in Egypt. The whole world seems to be sitting around talking it over. Even the public breathing-places in the various sections of the city are filled with chairs and tables, as are the parks and even the vacant lots. Sometimes

these open spaces are attractively fitted up with gigantic Oriental curtains, which make something like a tent, and even the high walls of the adjoining buildings are covered with great tapestry-looking cloth of Persian designs. There are a few canopies and there are bright lights at night.

I ventured into one of the larger of these meeting-places or cafés, soon after my arrival. The crowd was enormous—it seemed that at least a thousand men were seated at the tables, and that another thousand were trying to find places to be seated. But most of the places are taken soon after dinner and remain so for many hours. Groups of men sitting near me drank glass after glass of water into which they dropped loaf sugar, or a few drops of fruit syrup. Some were served to a gelatin concoction that looked much like huge “gum drops,” over which powdered sugar had been sprinkled. Others nibbled at slices of oranges served on little dishes about the size of “butter plates” at home. Some puffed cigarettes and others ordered large narghiles, removed their slippers from bare or stockinged feet and squatted on the small chairs in what we call “tailor fashion.”

And they talked and talked!

Magicians came along and gave little private

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entertainments at single tables before six or eight persons, and seemed to be pleased if they collected two cents for their work. There were sword-swallowers, men who palmed playing cards, and men who made guinea pigs disappear into the air. There were pipe players and tomtom players and acrobats who performed in the road, for the tables are often set into the middle of the highway, so that pedestrians and donkeys or camels find it difficult to pass around "popular" corners. Men passed among the crowd with plates of shrimps and did a thriving business. Others offered the most outlandish articles for sale, most of which were carefully inspected by the frequenters of the tables, as if they were afraid of missing a bargain, and the appearance of a horde of "merchants" in the restaurants and cafés seemed to occasion no surprise. One man actually came up to my table, his arms filled with Hawaiian pineapples in big tin cans. Another offered big fly-screens for platters or large dishes; another glass tumblers; another hair combs, tooth brushes and safety pins.

I saw a man whose arms were filled with large pasteboard boxes, deposit his load upon the table before six or eight men, talk to them a little, and then take out a tape measure, guarantee a per-

fect fit to one of the men and sell him a suit of light underwear. Man came along with performing apes and monkeys, and played the flute as the animals danced and passed the hat for a collection. Men peddled rugs and shawls, tarbooshes, cigarettes, stamps, writing-paper and post-cards. Public letter-writers came along and offered to write one's "post"—as they call it. It seemed that if one sat at one of these tables long enough, all of the merchandise of the East and West, and all of the articles known to men for personal comfort would ultimately pass before him. And the really remarkable thing about it all was that the peddlers seemed to find purchasers for their goods, many of which were not exactly what one would expect to find near his table at a restaurant.

As I emerged from the café with its eternal litter of tables and chairs and loudly talking individuals, I soon found myself in the center of other cafés; for, during the hour that had passed, other chairs had been placed on the wide sidewalk and far into the gutter, leaving only a small passageway for pedestrians and vehicles in the middle of the road. The din was frightful. It seemed that there must be a riot, but close inspection proved that the noise all came from gentle conversationalists who were perhaps dis-



PUBLIC LETTER-WRITER, CAIRO.



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cussing the weather, or politics, and the hawkers of goods. But in the midst of it all, there was something that reminded me of riot. A large gong sounded and the roadway was cleared. Men arose from the tables and shoved their chairs back to allow a free passage to the coming vehicle. It was certainly an emergency call of some kind. But it was a strange one. Two men riding bicycles closely abreast, were carrying a plank between them. Strapped to the plank was a man who lay quietly and the men pedaled along as fast as they could. It was the ambulance, and a patient was being removed to the hospital.

I thought that all the people in Cairo, or at least a large percentage of the male population, was "resting" in the street cafés, but when I arrived at the big public garden in the center of the city I saw that I had been mistaken. All the people were there, too. The benches were filled—and they were everywhere—and people were squatting in the shade of every tree or bush. Every one here was "resting" excepting the members of a big brass band of perhaps sixty musicians, who were perspiring and noisily offering a program of Arabic music. Now, to the Occidental all Arabic tunes sound much alike. It is quite tolerable, when the flutes and tom-

toms play it for the dancers, even delightful when sung in the fields by the labouring classes, by the man in the desert who plods along beside his camel through the hot wilderness, and really enchanting as it proceeds from a different boat on the Nile at night; but too much of anything is likely to be annoying. And if there is anything on earth worse than a big brass band and drums bleating and blasting the walls and thumps and bangs of Arabia, Persia, Turkey and Egypt, I have not heard it, nor of it. Try to imagine a hundred pigs squealing in a boiler shop working at full blast, and permit a foghorn or fire-tug siren to speak a "theme" occasionally, and you will have some idea of what the band concert was like in the Ezbekiyah gardens. But, of course, it was my ignorance of the beauties of Arabic music. The conductor of the band waved his baton just as gracefully and frantically as Sousa ever did and he turned the pages of a "score," which proved that there were actually notes written down on paper that, played, produced the unearthly sounds. The people applauded and seemed to be pleased, as they sat back and sipped sugared water and smoked cigarettes. It costs but two and one-half cents to enter the Ezbekiyah gardens and sit beside big pools of cool water in which pond lilies are forever blooming;



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where the acacia and banyan trees make the air cool on the hottest day; where the band plays and where the motion picture show is free. Also there is a big inclosure cemented for roller skating, and there are little pools where the children float tiny dahabiyehs, as little children float their sailboats in the lakes of the parks at home.

Toward noon, as the sun becomes too hot for comfort in the open, the crowd at the cafés and squatting-places becomes thinner. Every one goes home and sleeps until the cool of the day. Waiters pile the thousands of chairs upon the little tables and people who walk or vehicles have a less impeded passage through the streets. But about four o'clock in the afternoon the chairs are put back on the ground, the crowd quickly assembles again, the band plays in the gardens and everything seems to be noise and confusion again until late at night. And one's natural reflection is that these people are asking themselves: "Why work?" The people of Cairo have a fairly prosperous and generally healthy appearance. Perhaps the poorer classes do not have many luxuries, but why spend one's life in a rush and stampede for luxuries, when it is so easily possible to sit still, talk and drink coffee a la Turque or sweet water?

Even at places where actual business is transacted in Cairo the hours are short. Officials and clerks in the government offices go to work at nine o'clock and quit at one o'clock. "My brother is a gentleman," said an Egyptian dragoman to me, "he goes to work at nine o'clock and he's through at one." Stores, banks and offices are practically closed for about three hours around noon, for every one expects to be at home at that time, either sleeping or lying down. Some of the stores pull down the window-shades and lock the doors until five o'clock, just as they do at night. Then they open again at five and remain open until six—calling it a day at that time. There are innumerable holidays in addition to the three sabbaths of every week. Egypt is Mohammedan, so Friday is the official sabbath. There is a large population of orthodox Jews who keep Saturday. Sunday is the Christian sabbath and every one takes a holiday and little business is transacted. Jews help Mohammedans celebrate holidays and Mohammedans help the Christians. It seems to be any excuse at all for a rest; and if there's no excuse, people just take it anyway.

## CHAPTER XIII

### VISITING "HOLY PLACES"

ONE of the spots that appeals to the sentiment of about all the people in the world, irrespective of religious beliefs, is the stone wall that protects the bank where Pharaoh's daughter found Moses in the bulrushes. Accordingly, it was one of the first places I visited when I started out to see the "sights" of Cairo. The bulrushes have disappeared, it is true, and one goes a long way up the Nile before finding anything that suggests the lotus or rush, both of which once flourished in lower Egypt and made such an impression upon the ancient people that they carved them upon the stone pillars of their temples, thus hoping to assure them of immortality; but there is apparently little doubt in the minds of the scientists and archeologists as to the authenticity of the exact spot at which the great lawgiver was discovered in his little floating cradle by the princess who was going into the water to bathe. There is considerable disagreement concerning

the identity of the exact Pharaoh who was reigning at the time, for the gentleman to whom the distinction is given by leading Egyptologists now reposes in the Cairo museum, whither he was transferred from his tomb; and this does not at all agree with the Biblical account of his having been drowned with his hosts in the Red Sea. But it seems to be thoroughly established that the royal palace at the time was situated on the island of Rhoda, which is not more than a twenty-minute drive from the present city of Cairo. The palms still wave in the big garden, and the banks of the Nile are walled up with ancient stones, giving the place a tropical and luxuriant appearance even from a distance. But all traces of the palace are gone. The place is still called "Pharaoh's garden," but the visitor finds little beyond the name to suggest to him the environs of a royal dwelling. But as we have seen frequently enough, the old kings of Egypt thought much more of a life in the great hereafter than they did of life on earth. Perhaps they lived in mud houses, only a little better than those seen today, and their energies were expended upon tombs and temples which should live after they were gone and show to the world that they were thinking of immortality.

One goes first to what is called Old Cairo, a

thickly settled, narrow-streeted section, where the buildings creak with age, and yet which the archeologists say are as of yesterday compared to the ruins upon which they rest. Cairo itself, particularly that section referred to in the vicinity of Rhoda Island, is upon the site of very ancient cities—one of which, at least, the city of Fustat, was famous in its day, a city that was said to contain one thousand two hundred and seventy public baths. Once it was celebrated as a city both populous and filthy, but withal a very religious community; and I thought of ancient Fustat, which a conquering general said it took ten thousand torches to burn, and fifty days for the conflagration, when I arrived at Old Cairo. A carriage deposited me on the bank of the Nile about nine o'clock in the morning. The same crowds of talking and smoking men that one finds in the newer city were here, squatting on the ground, sitting on stones and leaning against walls of the river-bank. Going down a stone incline in which notches had been carved to "hold" the bare feet of the natives who come here to fill their water jars and bathe, I boarded a "ferry," on which travelers to Rhoda are carried across stream by an old man who slowly poles his craft and charges five cents for the round trip. The ferry is little more than a raft

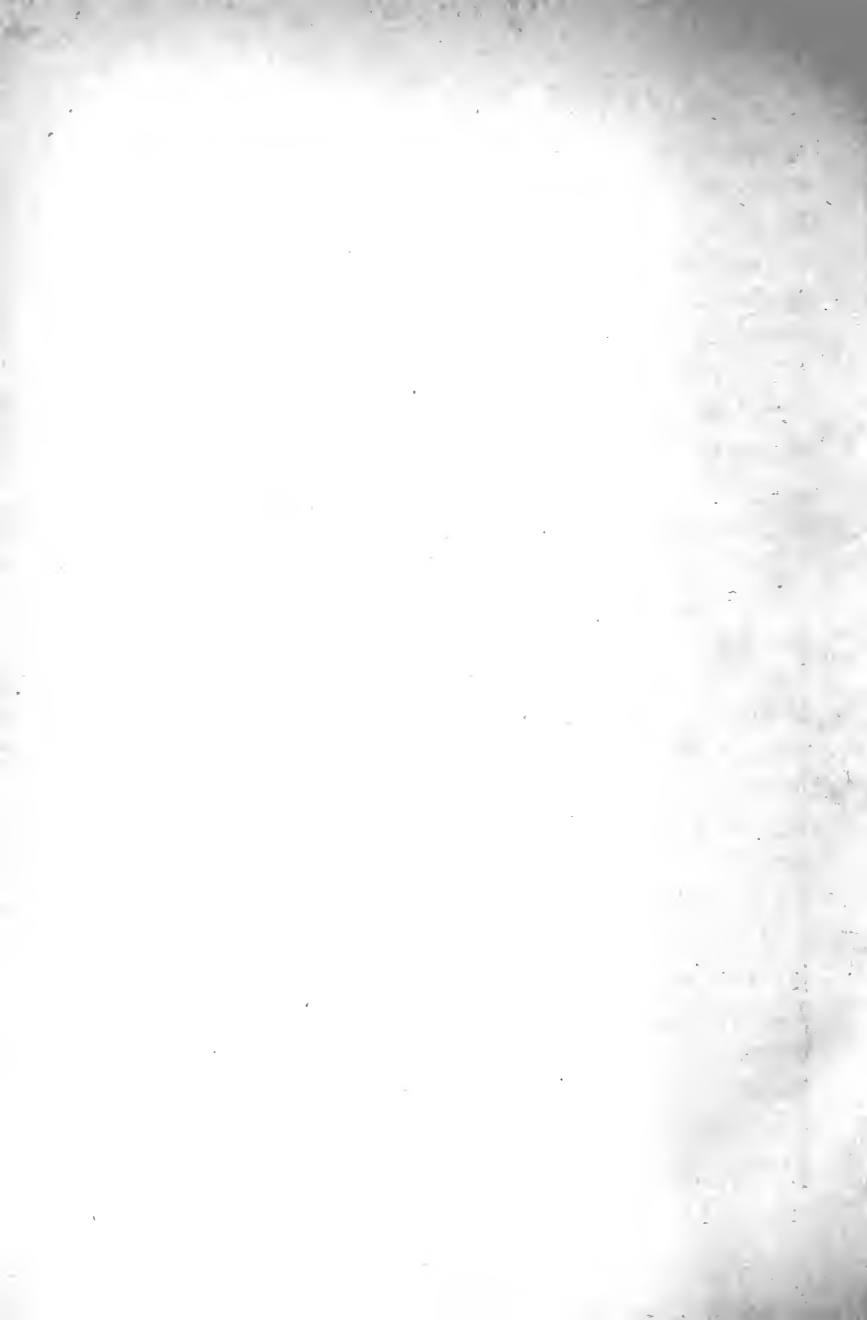
with a point in imitation of a bow, and the passengers stand during the slow journey, along with donkeys, market-women with their hampers of fruit and vegetables, and other personalities of a strange crowd.

Pharaoh's garden is approached by a similar incline in the stone wall of the river-bank. You scramble up this, if you wear shoes, and if very careful, need not slip down more than once or twice. It is muddy and wet from the bare feet of the natives who have come down here to bathe—even as did Pharaoh's daughter, and all the sons and daughters of all Nile dwellers since her time, for of all the people in the world the Nile folk seem to be the most frequent bathers. Mohammedans must wash before they pray, and as they pray five times a day, as the Nile is their only source of water supply, as there are over eleven millions of inhabitants in Egypt, and as there are very few bathtubs, it goes to reason that the Nile banks are very busy water resorts, where the ablutionists do not feel the necessity of donning bathing suits.

But tradition says that Pharaoh's daughter bathed on the other side of the little island, where there is now a wall and no landing place, so I walked along through narrow avenues of palms, acacias and banyan trees—avenues



RHODA ISLAND. TRADITIONAL SPOT WHERE MOSES WAS  
FOUND.





where it is said that Moses paced up and down when he was praying for the deliverance of Israel. It is a beautiful spot. The island sits out in the river like a huge flatiron with its point upstream. Even on this hot morning, there was a wind from the water which waved the plumes of the palms. The site is one that commands a view of the river, both up and down stream. It was an ideal spot for a palace—an ideal location for an ancient king who could sit in the garden and observe whatever was taking place on the river. As I wandered along, the silence was twice broken, first by a turkey gobbler, who made the most American sound that I had heard for months, and by a woman's voice. She spoke in Arabic and I did not understand what she said, but she held out a handful of large and juicy apricots, from a basket which she was filling from a tree that stood near the walk. I accepted the gift, gave her five cents, and she gave me her blessing.

When I reached the place which the world accepts as the "exact spot" where little Moses was floating, I found it already occupied by one who had come earlier than I. A boy was driving two blindfolded oxen around in a monotonous circle, raising water from the river in big earthen jars, which dumped it into a ditch, whence it flowed

in a tiny stream to the apricot trees and kept them from withering and dying. The oxen kept on grinding their squeaking wheel, but the boy jumped from the sakieh and shared the apricots with me when I invited him to do so. We spoke a different language so I could not tell him that I was proud to do so, but I felt it an honour to make him my "guest." Here he was, a half-naked little urchin, probably earning about two cents a day for his dizzying toil, as he followed the oxen around the circle and saw to it that they kept moving. Dumb oxen! And yet dumb animals will not perform such labour if they are permitted to see what they are doing, so rags and "blindlers" are put over their eyes. Only men and the children of men must do so to keep alive. And yet this little chap was the sole occupant of one of the most celebrated spots in all the earth! But it meant nothing to him and he cared not. Perhaps he did not know; perhaps he had never heard of Moses. At any rate, his work was of much more importance to him than the fact that men came thousands of miles to put their feet in the ground where his sakieh was slowly turning to water the trees. He grabbed a half-dozen apricots, seemed to be frightened, as if he were stealing something, and then jumped back on the pole and whipped the oxen

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so that they would go faster and make up for lost time.

It was the coolest and most delightful spot that I had found in Cairo, this shady island out in the river—and who can say that a Pharaoh did not find it so ages ago, when the great-grandparents of these stately palms were waving their fronds over the river? Who can say that for that reason he did not decide to build his palace there and make the place the center of his kingdom, which caused the world to tremble?

I sat in the shade and recalled those romances of ancient Fustat by George Ebers, the Egyptologist. In that day there were stately barges on the river, and stately princesses lounged upon their decks as they were rowed along the stream by African slaves, anointed with the perfumes of Arabia and fanned by long ostrich feathers from Nubia. The day before I had talked with an old friend and associate of Ebers and perhaps this brought back the recollection of those thrilling days when the romances of ancient Egypt were read for the first time.

But my thought of romances was not for long. A teacher came along with his crowd of boys, who stationed themselves near me under another tree. The boys were learning passages from the Koran, which seems to be the principal branch of

study with Mohammedan boys, and each boy seemed to be trying to intone his text a little louder than the boy next to him. Here again was the noisy East. Here another of those incomprehensible things to the occidental mind. But the teacher seemed to be satisfied, and sat back listlessly reading a book, while the hubbub continued about him, so I realized that I was the intruder, not they, and again I sought the incline and slipped and slid down the passageway to the ferry, where the old man was waiting for me—and incidentally for his five cents, which he does not receive until he has given a passenger a round trip on his ancient raft. Men were filling their goatskins with water, others were bathing, and women were filling water jars. After all—perhaps Rhoda has not changed so much since that day that has made it celebrated in history.

Within one hour after I left the place where the mother of Moses hid her little son in an “ark” made of bulrushes, so that the crocodiles would not get him—because crocodiles were not believed to molest anything in bulrushes, and the idea is frequently represented in Egyptian art as relating to the hiding of sacred personages—I visited three places that are holy to the followers of three religions. Perhaps the fact would not have appealed to me as it did, but for the



WATER-CARRIERS WITH GOATSKINS.



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popular impression that Cairo is an unholy, rather than a city for holy pilgrimage. Yet here almost within a stone's throw of one another are three shrines, and all along the narrow streets are what correspond to "tenement houses"; low structures of stone which extend for whole streets, which are rented to visiting pilgrims, who represent the three religions best known to the Western world.

The trouble with holy places is that frequently after one has made his pilgrimage, and enjoyed all of the mental sensations that come from visiting spots that are hallowed because of sacred or historic figures, he learns an hour later that history is all wrong; a new historian has arisen who will not accept things as they appear to be and have been for centuries. Perhaps he is a man who presents such conclusive arguments that one cannot consider him entirely wrong. So one goes on to the next place hoping for better results. But the three places mentioned are marked with many signs of almost conclusive evidence.

Perhaps one of the three has almost passed into decline, and is today almost deserted, but it still retains a firm hold upon the devotees of Mahomet, and there is much about it that separates it from the other similar places of worship, so

numerous around the city. To the Christian, the most interesting place in Cairo is the crypt of the little Coptic church, built over what was probably a dwelling where the Mother of Jesus rested with her infant son when they came to Egypt to escape the persecutions of Herod. Tradition says that they resided here about three months. The orthodox Jew thinks most of the small Jewish church near by, which marks the spot where Moses prayed for the deliverance of Israel. The Mohammedan turns to the Mosque of Amr, a little further down the road; and he turns with a belief that it is sacred above other mosques in the city, and has become so fanatical in some of his practices and zeal at this point, that the government has been obliged to step in and make regulations that prevent people from doing things that are likely to be injurious to the public health and safety. For example, iron bars have been placed in front of a small stone recess, so that it cannot be reached. The belief exists among Mohammedans that persons who are ill and go here and rub their tongues against the stone wall until they bleed, will be miraculously healed. The stone has two deeply worn trenches that are still smattered with blood stains. There are two pillars in the mosque set about six or seven inches apart. Good Moham-



medans who are assured of Paradise are able to squeeze between the pillars; while the person who cannot, had better mend his ways before death overtakes him. Quite naturally, this place led to all sorts of quarrels, and naturally gave thin persons a big advantage over the stout ones, so the government has placed iron bars around both pillars and the space between, thus leaving the question of future bliss to be settled by a more vigorous test of qualifications.

The old mosque is a large, but scarcely an imposing structure. It seems to be passing into decay, as well as into disuse. Even the bits of straw matting on the floor are tattered and ragged. The attendant at the door—as at all Cairo mosques—collects a fee of ten cents from the unbeliever who enters the big court; but the unbeliever is not required to remove his shoes, or to tie on those big yellow "gunboats" that are placed upon his feet at most of the others. The Mosque of Amr seems to be a place neglected and forgotten. A few sleeping figures were lying in the shade of the three hundred pillars. But one becomes used to these in a mosque, for in addition to being a church, it seems to be the coolest rest-house and the most popular place for a nap and is liberally patronized by sleepers as well as praying gentlemen.

But the other mosques have plenty of worshipers who are bowing or kneeling toward Mecca. Here, every one seemed to be dead, like the big mosque itself. On Friday only a few pious Mohammedans venture into Amr's sacred inclosure to worship. They are no longer able to rub their tongues against the stone and they may not try to squeeze between the pillars for the purpose of gaining immortal life, so they go to one of the newer mosques—perhaps to that magnificent pile of yellow alabaster, which looks like a gigantic onyx clock, which proudly raises its glistening minarets within the walls of the ancient citadel.

But the fact remains that the khedive comes here once every year to worship, and Amr suddenly assumes its great importance as one of the holiest of the shrines of Cairo. Not long ago, when the Nile did not rise and famine threatened the land of Egypt, the heads of all the churches, Mohammedan, Coptic, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Greek-Orthodox and Jewish, agreed to meet together and pray for rain. The Mosque of Amr was selected as the most appropriate place for the gathering, in many ways one of the most remarkable ever held in Cairo.

At first one naturally doubts that Mary and Jesus rested in the little stone niche in the base-

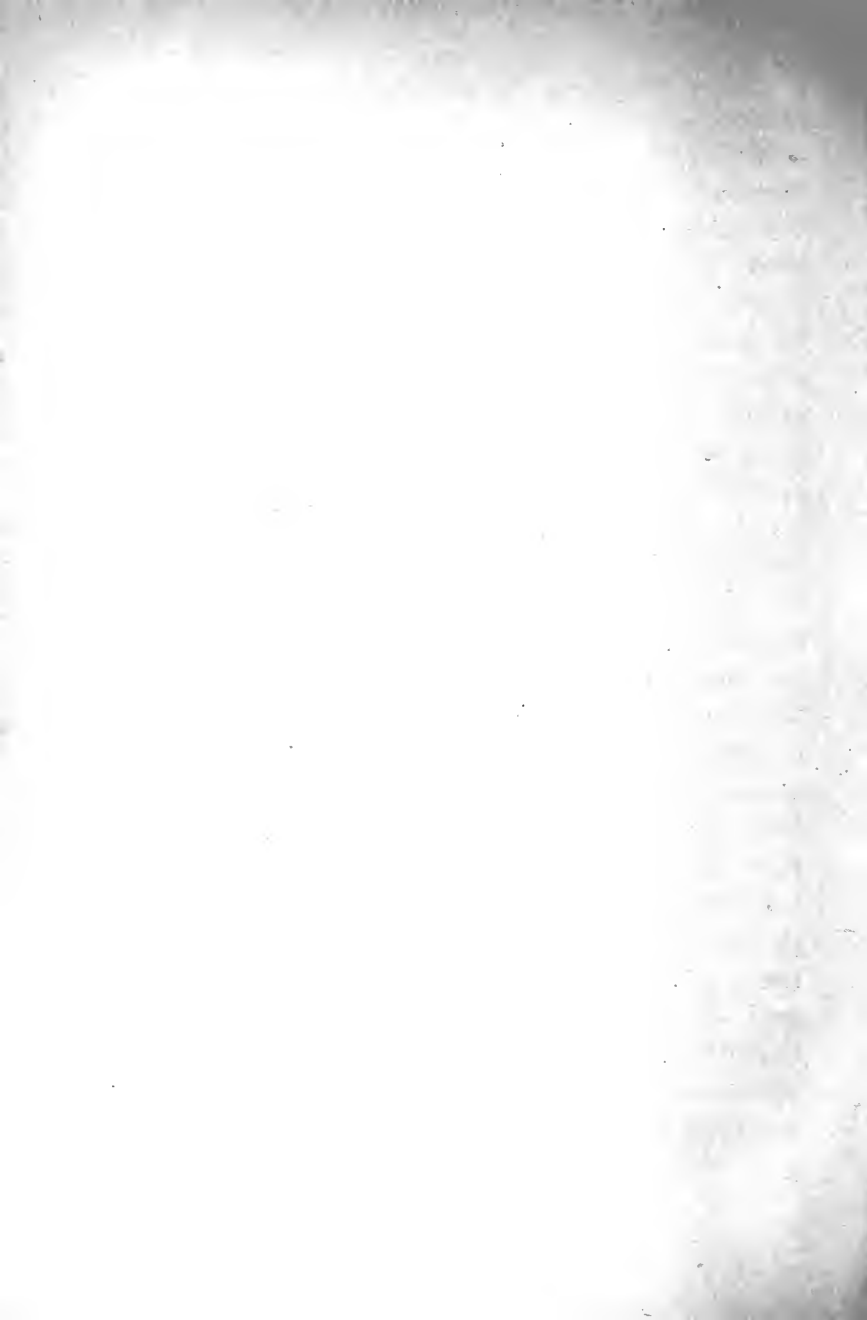
ment of the Coptic church; but I believe most of the historians accept the place as practically certain. The Coptic church was in a flourishing condition under St. Mark, who dwelt at Alexandria, and it has continued to flourish since that time, despite the warfare against it, and the prejudices that have naturally sprung up against it in a Mohammedan country. The Bible says that the Holy Family came to Egypt, and there is no good reason to disbelieve the statement of the "earliest Christians" that this church was built on the site of the underground house in the narrow street of Old Cairo that was their lodging-place. They would naturally have carefully guarded such a place through all the centuries that have passed, and there is no good reason to believe that its position has been changed.

But probably the greater change has come over the Copts themselves. The church is ruled by a patriarch who is selected from the monks in the monastery on the Red Sea. There are twelve bishops of the church, and while they need not be monks, they must lead strict lives. The priests are permitted to marry one wife, if they do so before ordination. They place great stress upon immersion as the only form of Baptism and place three kinds of holy oils in the water. Boys

are baptized when they are forty days old and girls when eighty days old. Children who are not immersed, they believe, will be blind in the world to come. But there is much in the Coptic church that seems to be more of Islam than of Christianity as we know it. The women of the Copts do not wear veils, but their position in the household is much the same as in the Mohammedan family. They do not see their husbands until they are married and their marriages are contracted for by their fathers and their husbands' fathers. The law of the church compels them to stay in the house after they are married until after their first child is born, but this custom is slowly passing. Copts pray about five times a day, as do the Moslems; they often wash before praying as do the Moslems, and instead of turning toward Mecca, they turn toward the east. They stand during the three-hour service at church, the older members of the congregation leaning on crutches. At death, the women wail as before Moslem houses for three days, and women visit the cemetery to wail and mourn, as do the Moslem women; and after visiting burying grounds, people give alms to the poor, a custom that has come down from the ancient Egyptians. Copts seem to be proud of the fact that they are not Mohammedans, although they real-



ENTRANCE TO EL-AZHAR UNIVERSITY, CAIRO.



ize that they are despised and looked down upon by the entire Moslem world. Perhaps they are "clannish" also, as are most people who have been persecuted. Several times when I was in Upper Egypt, a donkey boy, endeavouring to have me take his donkey for a ride, rather than one of several waiting for hire, would slyly slip around to my side and show me the blue tattoo mark of the cross upon his wrist, which he seemed to think established his priority.

One of the most interesting differences between Copts and Moslems is the anxiety of the former to study and learn, to educate themselves and to have their children educated. Until recently, however, their schools have been much like Moslem schools. Their boys learned to recite the epistles and gospels in Arabic and Coptic, as the boys are taught to recite passages from the Koran—and when they learn them, they are "educated."

I went to the largest Mohammedan university in the world, El-Azhar, a mosque which lies in the midst of filthy and narrow streets, and presents no more attractive entrance to the world than the boot stalls and fish markets next door. But as high as six thousand boys and young men are students here, and represent the entire Moslem world. The mosque dates from the

tenth century, and since 988 A. D. it has been a school. It has about three hundred "professors." When I arrived, the "professors," often dirty and unkempt creatures, were sitting around imparting knowledge to young Islam. Sometimes the groups of youngsters were fast asleep on the matting and leaned against the pillars or against one another's shoulders. Sometimes they were mumbling and chanting the Koran, and seemed to be paying no attention to the words of the teacher. I was obliged to put on yellow slippers as I tramped around the dust-laden matting, but half-clad men were sprawling there in the shade with dirty rags about them and muddy feet, having come in from the sprinkled streets for a "nap."

The boys received "scholarships" from wealthy or pious Mohammedans, several of the Sultans of Turkey, rulers of such countries as Morocco and even Afghanistan, as well as the khedives of Egypt, having contributed large sums which provide bread. The boys sleep on the matting where they hear "lectures." And despite its appearance, El-Azhar exercises an important influence upon the life of the Moslem world. It was here that Roosevelt "insulted" the students by telling them to be good and mind their English rulers. Here all sorts of political



feuds arise. Here are discussed the plans for the great Mohammedan conquering of the world—as the same plans were discussed centuries ago, and will be probably for many centuries to come.

One sees so many strange religious practices in the East, however, that it is nothing particularly new, after having made visits to a few of the principal houses of worship, to find customs and performances that appear to be anything but religious and seem to be almost those farcial "shows" that are sometimes arranged for the benefit of tourists in European cities by theatrical managers, who "leave no stone unturned," as the expression goes, to give to any one who pays the required admission fee his money's worth. This is particularly true of many of the Mohammedan churches or mosques, where the very floor is so holy that unbelievers may not step their shoes upon it; but after a fee of ten cents has been placed in the hand of the greedy gentleman at the door, and after another five cents has been placed in the palm of the other gentleman who ties yellow moccasins over one's shoes before he steps over the threshold, there is likely to be a "show" of some sort inside that is rather shocking to occidental eyes. For instance, I have entered a mosque with all

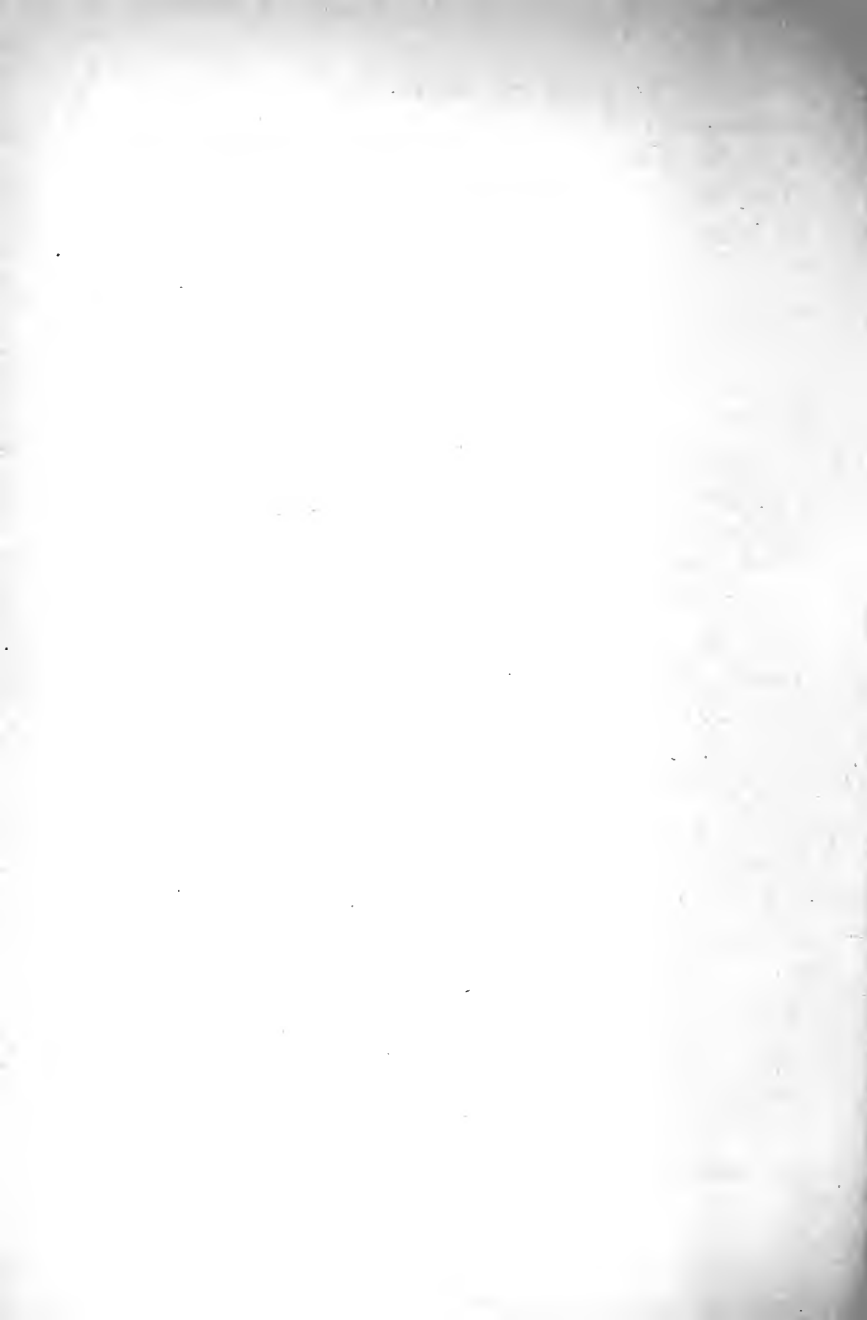
the best intentions in the world of taking things seriously, for one should respect another's feelings in matters of religious belief, and at least one should not scoff at another's faith; but within these mosques there are so many ludicrous sights that seriousness is often impossible, and things seem to be purposely turned into a crude show for the benefit of the spectator.

I have previously referred to so-called "holy men" and their prevalence throughout Egypt, but since that time I have seen another and perhaps the weirdest specimen of the kind. It was at the magnificent alabaster mosque inside of the citadel at Cairo. The building is a tremendous structure that seems to be constructed of white and yellow onyx. It is carpeted with beautiful dark red Turkish rugs, in every one of which reposes a fortune, and a hundred Oriental lamps sway on long chains from the dome in the center of the building. It is one of the most impressive churches I have ever seen, one of those places where one expects to find quiet and the opportunity to observe the worshipers and perhaps glean a little more information in regard to that complicated religion of Islam which nobody seems to thoroughly understand, not even its followers.

I approached the mosaic inclosure which



ALABASTER MOSQUE OF MEHEMET ALI, CAIRO.



marks the direction of Mecca, became interested in the ornate pulpit, and was about to retire to the background to watch the proceedings, when a "holy man" attracted my attention—purposely, I believe—by grunting aloud and then pretending to pray as I turned to see him. His eyes sparkled and he almost winked at me as the Mohammedans kissed his outstretched hand and I stood there beside him. Finally he held out his hand for a contribution. This was given and he grinned. We saw the antics and thought the "holy man" was picturesque enough to photograph, but the very thought of suggesting that this man come to the sunlight on the outside of the church seemed to be preposterous. A man who was so holy that people kissed his hands would not care to do anything for a camera man. But the proposal was made.

"If Allah wills it," he replied with a smirk.

"Two shillings," we suggested, and the "holy man" made the quickest move of his life to come out into the courtyard.

Instead of wearing a turban he had rags of all colours wound into a sort of tiara or pointed crown that reached about two feet into the air and came to a point on top. He wore at least ten long garments, all ragged and torn and hanging in shreds about his bare legs and feet.

Over all he wore a peculiar garment in the form of a huge overcoat, but one that was manufactured by a strange tailor. It was a "coat of many colours" with blocks of bright calico patched upon a brown background in "crazy quilt" manner, while various cords and tassels dangled about his waist. He carried a wooden sword about four feet long, and tin was wrapped about it—probably tin from an old Standard Oil can. This "weapon" flopped along the ground, dangling from a rope that hung over his shoulders.

"If Allah wills it," he replied, when we asked him to "look pleasant" before the camera, and then he grinned, although one might think that he would have been afraid of losing "caste" with those who believed in him, for they gathered around in the courtyard. And although these "holy men" are generally thought to be lunatics, it's very plain some of the time that they know how to look out for themselves. The gang stood around and chatted, gossiped about us and laughed during the operation of taking the picture. Anyway, what was caste? The Mohammedans gave him pennies; we gave him shillings! And could not a holy man do as he pleased? Inevitably came the refusal to be satisfied with the salary for his posing, as agreed



“ HOLY MAN ” IN THE ALABASTER MOSQUE OF MEHEMET  
ALI, CAIRO.





upon before he came out of the mosque. He was worth more, he said, and he spoke in Arabic and made appealing gestures to the crowd around him. They chattered furiously, but Newman said: "Two shilling is all," as he placed the amount in the hand of the "holy man," who grinned at his bargain, and went back into the alabaster mosque and squatted down near the door to collect contributions from believers and infidels.

But perhaps the strangest exhibition of all in a Mohammedan church is that provided by the dervishes. They perform on Fridays, the Mohammedan sabbath, and the public is again "invited" to see them, although they have not had the assistance of outside money for the past four years because of a fight that occurred within the church walls, when Christians were present. After that the government stepped in and prohibited all Christians from witnessing the dance of the dervishes, but the "show" has been regulated by government now, and "you pays your money and sees everything."

The church where they perform is a circular structure approached by several flights of steps and palm-bordered paths. The audience stands around a large dancing floor, much as the audience stands around a dancing floor at an amuse-

ment park at home to watch the roller skaters or dancers. Mohammedans sit up in the galleries and leave the lower spaces to unbelievers. The floor is slippery as ice. The service is announced for three o'clock in the afternoon, but, as of everything else that is announced in Oriental countries, it begins about an hour later than scheduled. About a quarter of four, young men and old men, wearing black, dark blue or brown mantles, and caps with a tall crown and no "brim," begin to stroll into the inclosure, drop off their shoes and flop themselves down beside the railing of the big inclosure on small straw mats. They move their lips in prayer and sometimes bend their foreheads to the floor while they are waiting, for this is a holy place and a holy service, although it seems to be anything but holy to the onlookers.

Finally, after about thirty of them had arrived—a larger number than usual, they told me—the sheik, wearing a big green turban, which made him different in appearance from the others, entered the inclosure, nodded to the assembled dervishes, who again put their foreheads to the floor and then approached the sheepskin mat on which he was squatting and kissed his hands. The sheik clapped his hands for the service to begin. Men in the choir loft

began to play flutes and tom-toms and a singer stepped forward and sang a tedious song in Persian to the dance music, and he was the only person of the lot who seemed to realize that it was a religious service. He intoned his words, and tried to make the music sound like a chant, by getting far behind the instrumentalists; but he was not always successful, and it sounded usually as if he were frightfully off key. The sheik clapped his hands again and the dervishes rose to their feet, bowed to one another, threw off their long dark mantles and began to whirl with their arms raised over their heads. They all wore white gowns that were made much like the accordion pleated skirts of the dancers in theaters at home, only they were merely very full and loaded at the bottom with lead or wire, so that they soared out into the air in big undulating curves, much as the skirts of Loie Fuller and other "serpentine" dancers used to do in the music halls. Verily, La Loie, as the French called the American dancer, received credit for a good deal of originality in her dances, but she must have seen the dervishes. They give practically the same performance.

There was a sort of deacon, who stood in the center of the floor, his mission being to keep every one in motion and to see that nobody be-

came "lazy." But they did not seem to need any one to spur them on. Some of these dancers must have been fully eighty years of age, old men with long white beards; but they toddled around as best they could, and made their skirts fly as did the younger men. After a while the music assumed a faster tempo and gradually became nothing but frantic screeches, "encouraging" the dancers to a frenzy of movement. An ear unaccustomed to it could not distinguish it from the music that is heard in the cafés of Cairo, which we have seen imitated at world's fairs, where the dancers were not dervishes, and where the exhibition was considered anything but holy. But here, again, the authorities have stepped in and demanded a lessening of the fury of the thing. The Cairo dervishes—like those at Constantinople and Damascus—used to whirl until they fell, biting their lips and tongues, fainting or frothing at the mouth in fits and spasms. But suddenly the music stopped. It was the decree of the king's men in Egypt. The men fell to their knees quite exhausted, and the sheik mumbled a prayer and went out, followed by the others. It might not have seemed quite so funny, but I stayed in the garden to look at the tropical flowers, and saw the dervishes come and dip their sticky feet in a big stone tank

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under a hydrant, before they scuffed them into their slippers and went about their several ways rejoicing. Technically, the dervishes are Mohammedan monks, but near the monastery, where they live, they have modest homes and immodest families; for they are allowed to marry, and in their routine lives they are much like other men, excepting on Friday, when they give the serpentine dance, which makes them objects of reverence.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### AN EGYPTIAN SAVANT

**H**E is a little old fellow, chubby and ruddy-faced, and he wears a gray beard that is just long enough to convey the impression that he has not shaved for a week. His yellow linen trousers are wrinkled and dirty, and he wears a little alpaca coat that cannot be buttoned by at least six inches. He sits at an old-fashioned desk that is piled at least a foot high with documents, some of which bear big red official seals, letters, pamphlets, mummy cloth, hieroglyphic inscriptions on slabs of stone or on blotting paper, where they have been impressed from the original stone, pieces of bone that look as if they had belonged to a human skull once upon a time, and a big box of cigarettes. Beside his chair are other chairs and upon these are piled large volumes, to which he frequently refers. For he is a student, this man, a writer of mighty tomes. He is, perhaps, the greatest living authority upon the subject to which he has devoted his life. The gentleman is Gaston Mas-

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pero, until recently the "keeper" of the mammoth Egyptian museum in Cairo, one whose name is familiar in all works on Egypt that have been published in the last thirty years, and one whose name must be written hereafter in all books that relate to exploration, excavation and restoration among the ancient buildings along the banks of the Nile.

Maspero is a Frenchman, like Mariette, that first "keeper" of the museum, which was built to keep together the wonderful collections that were being constantly found in Egypt and which were being sent to other countries to enrich their Egyptian collections. He is Mariette's successor, a position of honour and a reward for his long years of service in the field. He discovered some of the most important documents that have ever been unearthed here; he found royal mummies, tombs and temples the very locations of which were forgotten by the world, and he has been a prolific author. When I asked him how many titles reposed on library shelves to his credit, he seemed surprised at the question and told me that he did not know. He had never thought to count them. He had written countless pamphlets, about thirty large volumes and a lot of smaller ones. They have been translated into so many languages, and revised so fre-

quently, that he has not even retained a complete collection himself. He says his life has been too busy to pay any attention to such things.

"I am sixty-nine years of age," he said to me, "and I have been always working. I believe that I have earned my rest and I have resigned my position. But the work that I have planned to do before I leave Egypt! And the work that I have planned to do after that time! Life is too short, and we become old just as we get started."

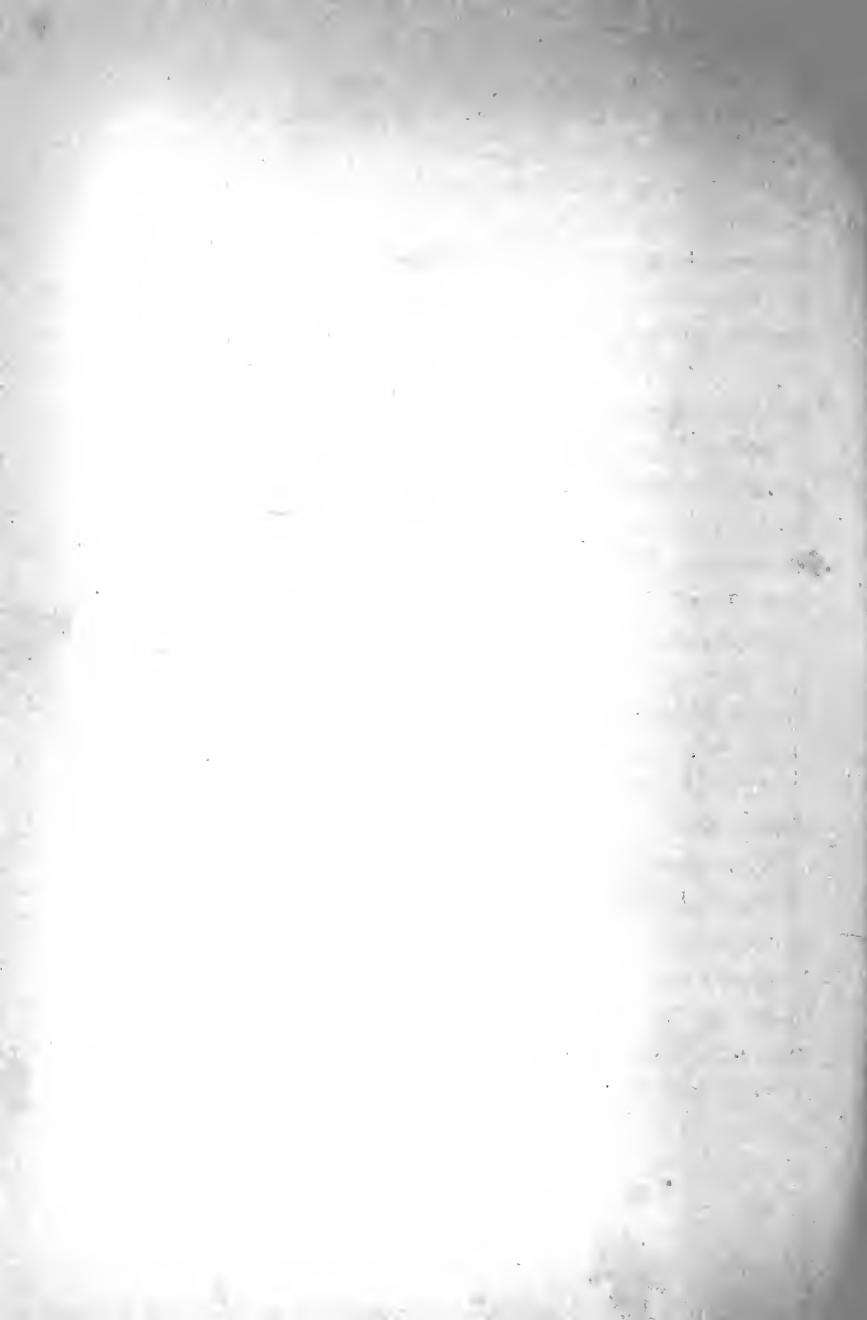
Considering Maspero the highest authority in such matters, I was glad to ask of him a question which had been recurring to my mind ever since I began a pilgrimage of Nile shrines. "What do you consider the oldest thing in Egypt that was made by man?"

"You begin with a difficult question, one of the most difficult of all," he replied, "and my answer must be that there are many things here that antedate all authentic history. Certainly, the Sphinx is older than our history, a thing that belongs to the mythic ages. I haven't a clear idea when and by whom it could have been made. I believe that it was probably suggested to its builders by some rock that took this natural form, whereupon the chisels of flint or other hard substance assisted nature. This process





SAKHARA.



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went on from age to age, for we know that it has been repaired and improved upon several times. But there was a still older rock of the same shape up near Assuit, of which we do not hear so much. Perhaps this is because it has now disappeared, having given way to the pressure of the quarrymen. I feel safe in saying that the oldest thing in Egypt to which I care to assign an exact date is seven thousand years old. I found inscriptions at Sakhara that are much older than our history. They were written in a language that appears to have been almost forgotten when the inscriptions were made, thus far antedating hieroglyphics. It seems to have been a language known to the priests or leaders of men, much as Latin is sometimes known to church-goers to-day."

"What do you consider the most important discovery you ever made in Egypt?"

"Do you mean from a personal standpoint? Well, that would easily relate to matters that are technical and of interest chiefly to students of archeology. I suppose the most important thing I ever did from the popular point of view was my discovery of the royal mummies; particularly to Americans and Englishmen I believe this would be the case, for there is no greater interest for your countrymen than a mummy.

They seem to feel that it is a symbol of Egypt and is all sufficient. But perhaps this discovery of mine showed the really practical value of our work in constant exploration and excavation. Here was something really tangible, and the public could see that the work was worth while."

"Do you consider that practically everything has now been excavated, and that most of the really important discoveries have been made?"

"On the contrary, I believe that the ground has just been scratched and that we have just made a good beginning. Still, one can never tell. It is possible to spend thousands of dollars here in the most intelligent excavation work all to no purpose, for it is a constant game of guesswork. One can never tell what lurks beyond the shadow of the rocks and debris. But we are constantly making finds that warrant a continuance of the work, a broadening of it if possible, and discoveries which warrant me in making the statement that the work has been scarcely begun, when one considers how much there is yet to do."

"About how much money would you say is spent annually for Egyptian excavation?"

"That's another difficult matter to say exactly, for many private individuals are spend-

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ing large sums which are not always included in our reckonings. I should say that if thirty different people spent about five thousand dollars in one year, that would come somewhere near the exact figure. But we receive contributions from the outside. Phœbe Hearst of California gave us a large sum, and so did Pierpont Morgan, and scientists were engaged to work where they saw fit and as they desired."

"Can any one explore and excavate in Egypt?"

"Practically speaking, yes; but, of course, we require some sort of credentials. But the word of an academy, a university or a government is usually sufficient safeguard for us. We have a committee which sits during the winter months and passes upon the names of applicants who desire to enter the field and can show that they have sufficient funds to carry on desired work. But every one should remember that it is an easy matter to spend fifty thousand dollars in Egyptian excavation without obtaining a result worth mentioning. But one can never tell what great rewards may be awaiting the pick and shovel just a little deeper in the earth. For example, not long ago at a little village in Nubia—I cannot say just how the preliminaries of the discovery came about—some of the ancient Greek classics,

some of them supposed to have been lost to the world forever, were brought to light and are now being deciphered—things that enrich the knowledge of the world, and are more valuable than figures would indicate to the student.”

I asked Maspero for his photograph and he laughed outright. I should imagine the first time he has laughed so hard for many a day. “No,” he said, “I have no photograph. I haven’t been before the camera for many years. The last time I sat for a picture I wore my glasses and my eyes looked like holes in my head, and my face! No, it is not the sort of face that one wishes to see in an illustration. It is better for people not to see what I look like. They haven’t one even in the museum of Cairo, unless by chance one of my old ones has crept into some edition of one of my books.”

“In America perhaps we know Egypt best, or at least ancient Egypt best, by the romances of Georg Ebers, the German Egyptologist and novelist. What is your opinion of his work?”

“My opinion is that it was great and enduring work, that Ebers was a great man and that nobody could have done his work as well as he did it. He was my very dear friend, and we laboured together for a long time, side by side, until illness overtook him. When he was not

able to sit up he lay on his bed and dictated some of those romances. Think of that for industry! He wrote me about one hundred and fifty letters, which are among my choicest possessions. It's pretty difficult for a man of the present day to put himself into the atmosphere of thousands of years ago. He must have fitted himself for such labour by many years of diligent toil and research. Ebers did, and readers make no mistake by liking his novels. I have none of the romancing instinct in me; I have to write down cold, scientific facts—and that has kept me pretty busy. But as I said before, I am giving up the work. Even now, I confine myself to classification and direction, rather than to actual work. Let the younger men do that—there are plenty of them, and great futures seem to be dawning for some of them. Conditions are different than they were when I began—for that was a long time ago."

"How does one set out to become an Egyptologist? Is not the amount of beforehand knowledge a handicap that might discourage the average man?"

"It's like other things, you do what you do because you can't help it. When I was eleven years of age my tutor led me into the Louvre in Paris and explained some of the inscriptions and

hieroglyphics on the Egyptian monuments to me. I have always felt that I made up my mind that day to become an Egyptologist, and all of my energies all the rest of my life have been expended along that line. I couldn't help it. And now here I am at sixty-nine with my work just well begun."



## CHAPTER XV

### “DAWN” OF EQUAL RIGHTS

ONE hears so much about woman's rights in Christian countries, and so much about woman's wrongs in Mohammedan countries, that the opposite of either is interesting to observe, if merely as a matter of contrast. Some people believe that Mohammedan women will never enjoy the “rights” that belong to them; chiefly because they do not seem to want them; and, on the other hand, there are authorities, like Pierre Loti, who knows his Constantinople well, who say that the “dawn” has arrived, that the Turkish ladies are opening their eyes to the world and its possibilities, that they are following the styles of their French sisters in many matters of dress and social etiquette, discarding the veil by slow degrees, and at least preparing themselves for the “great emancipation” when the time comes for it.

Cairo ladies are usually thought to be much behind the Constantinople ladies as pertains to most of these worldly matters. The white face

veil, for example, is the "fashion" of Constantinople, and has been quite generally adopted by the better class women of Egypt. Here in the East, as in the far West, fashions seem to originate in Paris. When they reach Egypt, it is true, they are considerably altered to suit the requirements of Mohammedan women; but women who still appear in public draped in the heavy black robes that envelop them from head to feet, shove their toes into high-heeled French slippers. Often they do not slip the "heel" of the slipper over their feet at all, but trample upon it, thus converting the shoe into a sort of sandal, like the shoes to which they have been accustomed. But they are French shoes all the same. And there are many other forms of French finery about their costumes.

But the "progress" of Egyptian women is not very apparent to the casual tripper, who rides about the streets of Cairo in a carriage, or sits upon the hotel veranda and watches the crowd as it passes. Thus I counted it a particular pleasure when I was received into the home of an Egyptian family, having been invited by the father, husband and lord and master of the household, to dine with his family. Here at last was a peep into the inside of Cairo home life of the better sort; here the opportunity to observe

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whether or not the ladies of the family—to whom I expected to be presented, although the custom is not usual—had any thoughts or aspirations that could be compared to the thoughts and aspirations of the European or American woman. We usually think of these Oriental ladies as stout, lazy, perfumed, candy-eating, castanet-playing creatures; but it seemed very likely that this idea was obtained from the art works of the centuries—and the picture post-cards that are now circulated around the world. The gentleman who invited me to his home was a bey, thus he has a certain social position, and what he did and what his family did was quite likely to be at least an "indication" of the general trend that things are taking at the present time.

Arrived at his home, we were soon seated in a large drawing-room, the side of which looked upon a garden, and innumerable servants—who seem to pop up at every turn in Egypt—began to enter and place coffee, ice cold water and cigarettes before me in a rather bewildering succession, for the cold water was renewed about once in ten minutes, and when I ventured to lift a glass of it to my lips, the paterfamilias asked me to wait, clapped his hands, and a waiter brought a fresh glass for fear that it had become

warm. The bey sat back on his haunches and smoked innumerable cigarettes, and although he wore European clothes, he kept his "fez" upon his head while in his own home—even at his own dining-table, for an Egyptian does seem to be proud of that little red cap. Even the dragoon who may be wiping his perspiring forehead at the time, quickly claps it back upon his head when he is addressed by a foreigner. Even in hotel dining-rooms and other public places, they keep them upon their heads—and although I had not known it before, I suppose that all of them keep them on when they are in their own homes.

Perhaps a quarter of an hour after we had comfortably settled ourselves for a smoke, the first daughter arrived upon the scene, was presented to the stranger and settled herself for a visit. Then at intervals of five minutes, arrived other daughters and the mother, until there were five female members of the family. They sat down and chatted as freely as if they had been "lords of creation"—their fathers and brothers. Immediately they observed that I spoke English and that their father was addressing me in that language, they did likewise, and while their English had a foreign accent, it was grammatical and almost without a slip. Yet these were girls of Cairo, girls who do not have the "advan-

tages" of Western education and culture, girls who have never been beyond the borders of Egypt, and who are supposed by half of the world to be sitting behind screened windows and rushing to their private apartments when they see a stranger—or even a male friend of the family, approaching.

But English was but one of five languages which they speak fluently, the others being French, Italian, German and Arabic—all of which they found occasion to use in my hearing and yet did so without the slightest apparent knowledge of having performed a linguistic feat. Their mother's father came from Sicily, thus their mother herself prefers to speak in Italian, and when addressing her familiarly they used that language. The Egyptian servants were addressed in Arabic, while a maid who brought the grandchildren to be presented to the "American," spoke German and conversed with every one in that language.

"That was one reason why father engaged the German maid," said one of the daughters; "we had some difficulty in acquiring the correct German pronunciation and we believed that the best way to become fluent and at the same time correct, was to speak nothing but German to at least one person in the house."

I commented that it would be rare for any one to speak five languages fluently in America.

“But probably Americans do not find it necessary,” said one of the young ladies very politely; “with French and English I imagine it is quite possible to go anywhere with the greatest ease.”

“French?” I queried.

“Yes, I have heard that all the better class people in America speak French as well as English,” she replied. “Is it not so?”

[And, fortunately, at that moment the gong rang for dinner, and we proceeded not to that eight-course function called “dinner” which most Europeans and Americans must have gazed upon with wonder until they became accustomed to it, but to a meal that lasted for over three hours and contained twelve courses! And it is popularly said that people in warm climates do not eat heavily, particularly that they do not eat much meat, “because they do not require it.” But this was a “typical” dinner in a first-class Egyptian home and there were five meat courses! Conversation between all the members of the family became English and remained English throughout the long ordeal of dinner—because they had an English-speaking guest. The same thing would have been true in German, French, Italian or Arabic.]

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And as conversation lagged during the service of a course, I thought to myself, where in all of America would one find such a cultured, really educated group of women in one family, yet I have heard the speeches and read the "essays" of ladies who are always talking about the "cause" in America, which made impassioned pleas for sending the sunlight to "our benighted sisters in Mohammedan countries." All of which, it appears to me, is generally rubbish. I have seen proof of the fact that "poor benighted sisters in Mohammedan countries" could give some of—or most of—their European sisters what we call a "lively run" in most of the accomplishments, evidence of culture, social refinement and general knowledge of world's affairs. The "benighted" sisters are either so from choice, or because they are not in environment which is yet ready for the "light." Most of the better-class ladies in Europe read the literature, magazines, popular novels—and even scientific works—in three or four languages. They are able to talk intelligently of the operatic stars, or the latest fads in the art world, and of the literary lions of two or three countries.

The ladies in this family knew "Dicky" Davis, but had always called him "Richard Harding Davis," until they heard me say "Dicky," and

immediately they grasped the popular "nickname" of the well-known novelist; they said they would call him "Dicky" in future, and it seemed to please them immensely.

One of the details of this Oriental home life, however, that I was not able to grasp, and which I believe is quite impossible, is the natural tendency to indulge in what we sometimes call blarney. It is almost impossible to know what to say in reply or how to properly appreciate some of the compliments that are showered upon one who happens to be a guest under an Oriental roof. In the home of a Spaniard, you say that you admire anything, and as a matter of decency, he tells you that it is yours—although you are not supposed to take it away with you when you go. I was introduced by the bey to his family as one who "had condescended to take dinner at our humble home." At least once during the dinner each member of the family assured me that I had honoured the family board with my presence. "You say nothing," said one of the girls to her sister, who seemed to be less proficient in English than the others. "My daughter is so overjoyed by your presence in our house that she cannot speak," smiled the father. And so it went on until I felt that it had come my time for a "jolly" as we say in America, so I remarked



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that "Shepherd's hotel never serves ice cream like this," and the entire family enjoyed the best laugh of the season, after my feeble attempt to be "Orientially polite." It chanced that we were enjoying ices from that famous hostelry.

"You have ladies in your family at home?" asked the mother.

I replied in the affirmative, and she immediately asked after their health, and at my departure asked me to convey the compliments of the ladies of the household in which I had been entertained in Cairo to my relatives at home. And, as I left the house, I thought that probably my "ladies at home" would think pityingly of these ladies of Egypt, whom the books of travel say "are little better off than the beasts of the field and are considered as goods and chattels by their husbands and fathers."

## CHAPTER XVI

### YELLOW DAYS AND AZURE NIGHTS

**I**T must be a question in the mind of *every* Egyptian traveler whether he prefers the day or the night. Presumably one who goes to the Nile country anticipates bathing in the equatorial sunshine that seems to be as certain as dawn; but one from the West must also delight in those ultramarine nights when everything takes on the almost uncanny purplish blue tint that one has instinctively associated with the unreal and spiritual. Here again, as in thousands of ways, one finds the same surprise. He grazes beyond the boundary of today and finds himself suddenly transported to another world. The avenues of Cairo reflect the present, but follow one of those paved pathways a short distance and you quickly find that you have stepped back thousands of years. When the sun blazes and the merchants hang out the brightly coloured canopies before their shops, when the human tide flows by in its brilliant costumes, when the streets are filled with a shouting and gesticulat-

ing populace, it is easy to realize that it is the present.

But when the sun goes down, shedding strange rose tints over the sky, the throbbing of Oriental life seems to hesitate. Then in a moment, for the Egyptian twilight is almost non-existent, one seems to be blinded. The sun has glared for many hours. Presto! The curtain seems to be raised and a dark sapphire sky appears, studded with more stars than the Westerner believed it was possible for a human eye to see. This is Egyptian night, whether the moon shines or not. Just where the time-worn expression "black as Egyptian night" originated, one cannot imagine. Egyptian nights are amazingly blue. And, when night falls, time seems to fall back also. Beyond the few streets blazing with electric lights, realities seem to fade, and there is a gulf of centuries separating the past and the present.

It has been remarked often enough that one may sit on Shepheard's terrace for a few hours and watch the whole world pass. We tried the experiment often enough, but always there was something to lure us away from our comfortable seats beneath the palms. Better, we believed, to sit on the terrace after we had seen everything else and had grown weary of the sight. But, un-

fortunately, that time never came, so one cannot suggest similar tactics to travelers of the future. Unlike most of the other places of the world, one never tires of Cairo, and one never sees all the "sights." Part of this is due to the fact that it is one of the most fascinating cities in the world, because it is a blending of the old and the new, partly because the two halves of the world find this their most convenient meeting-place; and part is inexplicable.

Cairo is intoxicating; there are no two ways about it, and there cannot be two opinions. And everything and everybody are "sights" in the usual acceptance of the word. The staring European appears to be as strange to the desert man as the Abyssinian monk is to the Parisian. The automobile is as strange to the man driving a bullock-cart full of strange produce as the camel is to the American.

I have related experiences and incidents that transpired in the streets and came under my observation to life-long dwellers in Cairo and they assured me that while they would not be surprised at anything, they had never had similar experiences nor known of similar incidents. Thus when the stranger leaves his hotel steps, he plunges into a world that is certain to provide its quota of amusement and entertainment. One

thinks after the first day, judging from his experiences in other cities, that the kaleidoscope cannot continue to turn. Certainly the "tang" will have departed the following day, the "edge" will be gone. But the next day and the next, the following weeks and for weeks to come, it will be the same. And, after a time, one will become so immersed in the atmosphere of the place, so keenly alive to its perpetual joys, that it will be more difficult than ever to leave it behind and pass along to another destination.

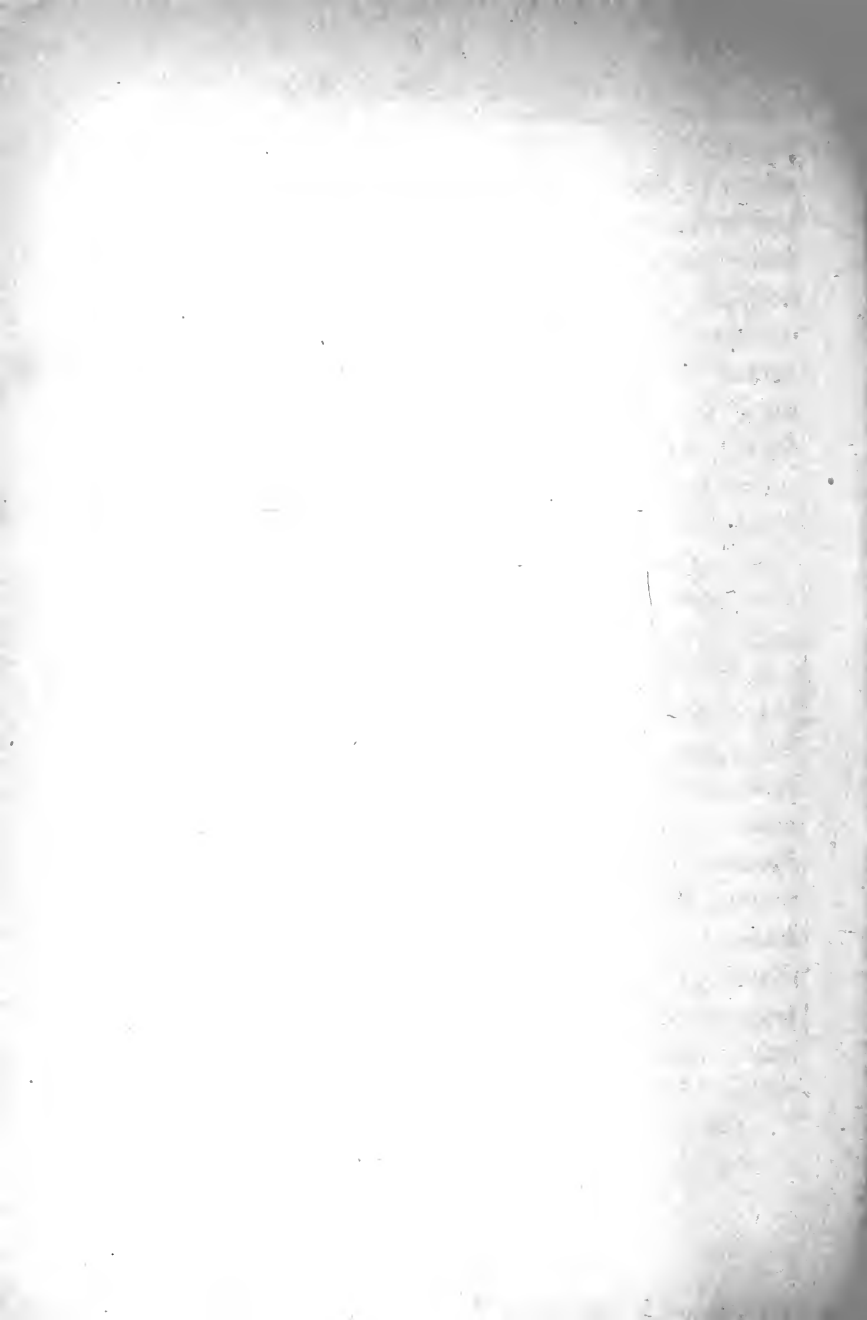
The safest advice a lover of Cairo may give to others is that advice given to the girl who was called a spendthrift because she could not resist the temptation to buy pretty things. She was told never to glance into the shop-windows where what she coveted was exposed for sale. Thus one who finds personalities in cities, and loves them as he loves a friend, and feels that sorrow at parting which he would feel when leaving a friend, should never go to Cairo at all. If he go, he should do so with the full understanding beforehand that he is enjoying something that will demand its compensation in regrets when he leaves, or he should pass hurriedly through the principal streets, visit the widely advertised shrines, engage in a few of the Europeanized pastimes of the fashionable hotels, and

then quickly be on his way. In this manner it might be easy enough to say good-by.

But when one has gone on a hundred little excursions by himself into dimly lighted narrow streets and lanes; when one has let himself drift along into the market-places where veiled women are purchasing their vegetables for the day, loitered along little bypaths where merchants sit all day with their entire stock exposed for sale on a reed hamper or tray, sat with them in their dingy and smelly cafés, smoking hookahs or sipping the national black beverage; after one has spent days and weeks in aimless wanderings, hoping that a kind fate may lead him to the doorway, courtyard or garden of a majority of the three thousand mosques which belong to the city, sat and dozed in the cool shade of those gardens which one feels almost the American poet must have had in mind when he wrote that "the groves were God's first temples"; after one has come to feel an affection for these bronze brothers with the flowing robes, although he knows that in their hearts they feel none for him and look down upon him with a lofty disdain, a pride of which the Western world knows nothing; after one has watched the praying men in the mosques, constantly kneeling and bowing toward Mecca with their thoughts drifting an



A CAIRO MERCHANT.





incredible distance from the things of the world which brush their elbows; and, finally, when one comes to feel almost a bond drawing him closer and closer to this world of which he has known nothing previous to his arrival in the Arab metropolis, then he will find himself manufacturing little excuses for postponing the day of his departure, and secretly, but vainly, hoping that it may never come.

One morning I had fully determined to spend a couple of hours on the hotel terrace. I doubted not that "the mountain would come to Mahomet" and that I would see enough to satisfy any ardent lover of "local colour" if I merely observed what passed. A man with a bag of snakes came and squatted in front of me. They were cobras that bloated their throats as their owner played a shrill air to them on a reed pipe. A white-clad native policeman came and drove him away, because he was obstructing the traffic, and a curious crowd was gathering to watch the strange antics of the reptiles. But a magician took advantage of the confusion and attention of the guardian of the peace by the snake-charmer to pull cards and a "magic wand" from the little bag that hung over his shoulders. In a flash, he was mystifying the crowd and urging them to be quick with their

pennies for he knew that the fate which had overtaken the man with the snakes would soon be his own. He would be driven along to the next street-corner, where he would be obliged to watch for another policeman to turn his head.

The street was a constantly moving procession of strange creatures ranging from the half-naked Nubian boy with a big brass ring in the top lobe of his ear, to a smartly gowned Parisienne, from a dervish with his tall felt cap to an English officer gaily arrayed in flaming scarlet uniform, and from a Persian merchant trying to sell a sandalwood fan to a German tourist with a feather in his hat.

The roadway was filled with automobiles, carriages, countless strange vehicles drawn by donkeys or bullocks. There were bells ringing, a clattering of the water-carrier's cymbals, laughter, loud talk, arguments and cries. Mohammedan women came along in groups of four or five, each of them carrying a plump youngster on her shoulder. A carriage rolled by with drawn white silk curtains, eunuchs seated on the box and sais running to clear the road. Ladies of the harem were seated behind the gauzy curtains, peering out curiously through white silk veils. Verily, it seemed that a circus parade were passing, and instinctively, although this

was an everyday occurrence, and an hourly occurrence of every day, I looked up the street for the herd of elephants and the calliope that would indicate the end of the procession. After all, perhaps it was this youthful enthusiasm for the circus parade that gave me so much pleasure from the Cairo parade. But it was not all a youthful recollection. Certainly there was music and the beating of drums! The elephants must be just down the street around the corner!

But no. A wedding procession was about to pass, and although I never knew the bride's name nor her rank in the social scale, which is so important in these countries, she must have been some Mohammedan princess about to leave her father's palace in Cairo for the palace of her lord and master in Bagdad. Perhaps I was mistaken, perhaps it was not such a great event after all, for the people in the street barely glanced at the gay entourage that was escorting her, and the din caused by her musicians did not attract as much attention from the crowd as the playing of the snake-charmer's fife had done a few moments before. After all, it did not seem to be unusual—for Cairo.

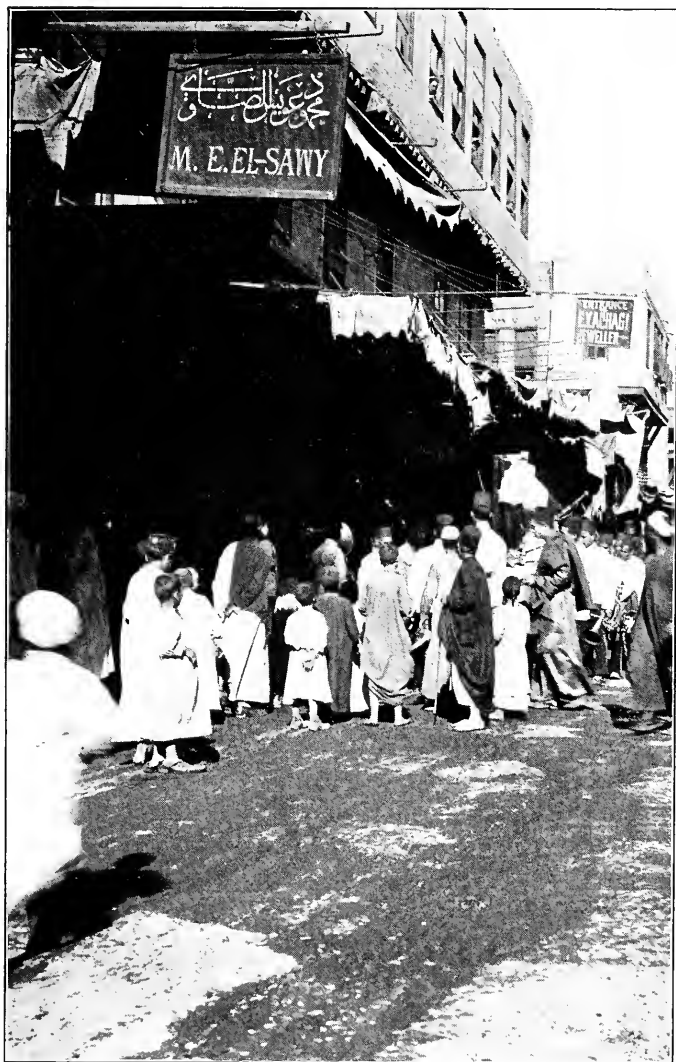
But here was a wedding procession worthy of the name. Another procession with stately trappings, brilliantly bedecked horses and many

carriages had passed earlier, and my enthusiasm had been checked when I inquired its significance and found that it was in honour of the circumcision of a Mohammedan baby. The dignified gentleman walking in front of the procession surrounded by men carrying flags and standards, some of which had flashing mirrors at the mast-head, was merely the barber who was to perform the operation. But this latter could be no celebration of such an event. I felt it instinctively, because it was too imposing. First the street was filled with jugglers and swingers of batons. They tossed things high into the air, balanced them on their noses, and they even danced to the lively strains of music made by the screeching pipers. Brilliantly caparisoned camels stepped proudly along as if prancing to the music. Certainly they were the most aristocratic camels in Egypt. They held their snouts high in the air and glanced from one side of the street to the other. On their backs were seated black boys who were violently beating drums, apparently in a not too successful attempt to enhance the rhythm made by dancers who whirled tambourines that were loaded with little bells. More camels, black boys, drums, dancers and jugglers. The bride's father must have been very rich, for

there is no more positive proof of wealth and position than the display that is made when a daughter of the house is going to be married. And soon the bride came along. The vulgar herd, however, saw her not. There was a little coop made of pretty lattice work and lined with silk curtains. It rested on two long poles that were hung to the trappings of two large camels that walked single-file about four yards apart. In the coop was the bride, perhaps a little lady ten or twelve years of age. Behind her, in carriages, were troops of relatives and friends, all chatting and visiting on this joyous occasion, certainly an affair that resembled the tournament procession in an American circus.

The old lure of a circus parade caught hold of me. I had known perfectly well earlier in the morning that I would not be able to resist the impulse to go somewhere and that I would leave my terrace-gazing for some later day; but I had not believed that it would be this very Western desire to follow a circus parade. But I did. I followed the camels, jugglers, drums and formed a part of the escort of the bride to a stately mansion set back behind a high wall in a courtyard. There the procession disbanded and a gate closed between me and the little bride whom I shall never see.

As it was near the noon hour, and looking about me to form some conclusion as to whither I had drifted to the tune of fife and drum, I saw that I was in the neighbourhood of the Muski, the most celebrated Oriental street in the world, so I repaired thither and soon found amusement enough with my old friends, the keepers of the bazaars. At least I like to think of them as friends, although I know that they lack about every qualification that one would have his friends possess. Approach this street and one is soon besieged by Greeks, Persians, Hindoos, Jews and Egyptians. They shout, and jostle passers-by in their endeavour to attract your attention to their wares. They beg the kind gentleman to step into their little booths and have a cup of coffee. Will the beautiful lady inspect their stock of necklaces, slippers or spangled shawls? Certainly the lady and gentleman will not find anything so elegant, nor yet so cheap, in all of Egypt. The merchant whispers, for he would keep it a secret, that he purchases most of his jewelry from the impoverished families of Cairo; therefore he has wonderful antiques, and he can afford to sell them cheaper than the other merchants. Also, he has a rare stock of ambers. The stranger knows old Hassan Fadl of Port Saïd?



THE MUSKI, CAIRO.





No? How strange. Well, old Hassan had the finest ambers in the world, and he grew so old that he could not keep his booth open more than two days a week, so he decided to abandon his business altogether and devote the remainder of his life to prayer and contemplation; and as he had no son to take his place he consented to dispose of his entire stock at a great sacrifice. Even for less than they cost, so that now they repose just over the threshold here in a little cabinet and will certainly delight the kind gentleman's eyes, if he will just come inside. Does he smoke cigarettes? If the gentleman will deign to smoke one of these fragrant delicacies from the engraved box held before him he will never smoke any other brand. And they are so cheap, monsieur! The merchant could send ten thousand to the gentleman's home address in any country and they would not only make their possessor happy, but would also delight his friends. Does madam smoke? Ah, see the delicate cigarettes that are smoked by the Turkish ladies, does madam not care to take them home to her friends? Yes, lady, these are the same that are smoked in the harems, the finest cigarettes in all the world. And rugs! Will monsieur not inspect a collection that has lately arrived from Bagdad and Teheran? They are

priceless, but it is a very bad season, the merchant needs a little money, so he would be glad to sell rugs for half their value. It is a splendid opportunity to obtain some of the finest specimens that ever went out of the East.

So on and on, one is addressed by the motley crew that has something to sell. The merchants do not merely make an announcement of what they have in stock, nor do they depend upon the display in the front of their tiny booths. They beg and they implore eloquently enough, and apparently they speak all the languages of Christendom, rarely making a mistake when addressing a prospective customer, but usually greeting him cheerily in the language with which he is familiar. And they are usually cheats and robbers, particularly the Mohammedans. They would count it a good day when they were able to take a Christian's money for what was worthless, doubtless dropping to their knees and thanking Allah for sending them such a customer and imploring him to send them another from whom they can get a larger amount. But they are born dealers and traders. They delight in wrangling and words over every transaction, always declaring in humility that they have been cheated, but often enough protesting, after they have made a profit

of fifty percent. that they were willing to lose in the deal, for the pleasure that it gave them to see a treasure in the kind gentleman's hand.

The Muski has the characteristics of all other bazars, although it is larger than the rest of them outside of Damascus and Constantinople. Perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say that other bazars are miniatures and copies of the Muski. Some of the stall-like booths are larger than commonly seen in Oriental bazars, but there are the same heaps of goods from the floor to the ceiling, the same disorder and confusion, the same suggestion of what would ordinarily pass for a junk-shop or second-hand store in America. The principal thoroughfare is wider than usual, but there are tiny alleys leading into it, in reality a part of the famous street, little nooks and corners that are jammed full of merchandise, often a single merchant having his entire stock in a space that resembles a large trunk or packing case. In places the street is roofed over, and elsewhere there are gaudy banners and awnings that protect it from the sun. There are sections devoted to the sale of red slippers, for example, and one goes some distance before he finds booths devoted to wooden shoes inlaid with mother-of-pearl, or yellow slippers, sandals or

other footwear. Whole sections are devoted to the goldsmith's bazaar, to silver-smiths, head-gear, saddlery, embroidery, perfume, silks, brass or about anything else. Also different sections are operated by different nationalities, and sometimes chiefly patronized by men of their own countries; thus the Greek is likely to find a Greek for his neighbour and he is certain of Greek patronage if he carries stock that Greeks require—which is true to a certain extent of other races.

After traversing the Muski, which runs perhaps a mile through the most densely populated section of the city, I emerged, just as I knew I would, for I had often taken the same route, underneath the Citadel, that majestic pile of buildings on a ridge of the Mukattam hills which pierce the eastern horizon of Cairo. Once, perhaps, the Citadel frowned on Cairo, and its builder, Saladin, no doubt believed when he was bringing the stone for it from the smaller pyramids at Gizeh, a favourite "quarry" for all modern builders of the vicinity, that it would answer all the purposes of a fortress. But its "frown" today is a satirical one. The hills rise beyond it and it would be quickly reduced if shelled from the heights beyond. The Citadel, which is pierced from

the interior by the Turkish minarets of the mosque of Mehemet Ali, is scarcely a fort or a palace today. Soldiers are quartered there, and it is a gloomy place in view of what transpired within its walls during its day of grandeur. Nevertheless, like everything else in Egypt, it exercises its lure and fascination. To say that one cannot see it without feeling its magnet drawing him closer and closer would be an exaggeration, for the Citadel seems always present away off there in the East. I have looked at it from a dahabiyeh floating slowly along the Nile in the early morning, when it seemed like a fantastic rose-pink dream-palace, its beautiful lines just distinct enough to prove that it was a reality, I have often enough looked up to it from various environs of Cairo, from the opposite side of the river, and I have penetrated to its heart, sat around its ancient stones and thought of momentous events that have contributed to the history of the world, when mighty men plotted their spectacular deeds and executed them either within or beyond its mighty walls. But one who can come to its base and not feel the desire to go up through the Bab-al-Azab and either to its chambers or to the terrace by the onyx mosque, has not begun his day as mine had begun. Here was a genuine day of

adventure. It had begun with the circus parade in the Ezbekiyah and the morning hours had brought me into the Muski. Now, with the sun at meridian, I found myself between those high walls that, silent today, once witnessed one of the bloodiest and most spectacular massacres of history. If I had been wandering in the fairy-land of the Arabian Nights, now suddenly I had plunged into romantic drama more sensational and bloody than playwright has ventured to place upon the stage, fearing to tax the credulity of his audience. Once an English playwright was laughed out of court because he had nine of the characters in his drama meet violent deaths in one act. Nine! What then of four hundred and seventy men of power, position and distinction slaughtered in one night? And it was of this tale that the cold high walls seemed to whisper to me as I sat in their shade at noontime.

This was no ordinary slaughter set in dark alleys with flashing blades reflected in dim street lamps. It was none of those common orders to soldiers to go forth, drag women and children from their homes and cut their heads off. Here was a plot worthy of the imagination of a Sardou, one that required a clever man to execute it. One thinks of the Roman who was

condemned to death, but who preferred that the end should come while he was making merry at the banquet table with his friends, while roses were being pelted across the table and girls danced. With his favourite at his side, he opened a vein in his wrist and when life was departing, attempted to rise to his feet with the flowing bowl at arm's length. With such a stage setting, the massacre of the Mamelukes was accomplished, fulfilment of one of the darkest plots of history.

The Mamelukes, as the name indicates, were formerly slaves, either purchased or captured in war, but in time became so powerful that they reached the throne and ruled Egypt for centuries. Even after they no longer sat on the throne, they were still a power to be reckoned with, and their oppression and dissolute conduct still had its influence in the land. Mehemet Ali, an Albanian who served in the Turkish army at an early age, had been elected Pasha of Egypt by the people, and his election had been confirmed by the Porte. He entered Egypt bearing the rank of Major, but rapidly gained authority, and in 1805 found himself ruler of the land of the Pharaohs. But his rule was hampered by the still powerful Mamelukes, so he planned the coup that would rid the country

of them forever, and although many of them had executed brilliant plottings of a similar nature, proving themselves to be wily Orientals worthy of the traditions of their race, they fell easy victims to his scheme for their extermination. All the Mamelukes of power or position were decoyed into the Citadel, four hundred and seventy of them, presumably to witness the ceremony of investing his son Tusun with a pelisse and the command of the army, and Mohammed Ali received them cordially, even with honours which they thought belonged to their rank. They drank coffee together in Oriental fashion and were then invited by their host to form themselves into a procession. Escorted by the Pasha's troops, they filed between these stone walls. Mehemet Ali remained behind, presumably to attend to some detail of the ceremony with his son. When the procession reached the gate and after the soldiers had passed beyond it, the portal suddenly closed before them. The Mamelukes soon realized that they had been caught in a trap, but escape was impossible. The soldiers quickly ran around to an advantageous position and acting on orders from their commander, opened fire on the powerless guests. In a short time the Mamelukes were either shot, or, if they tried to

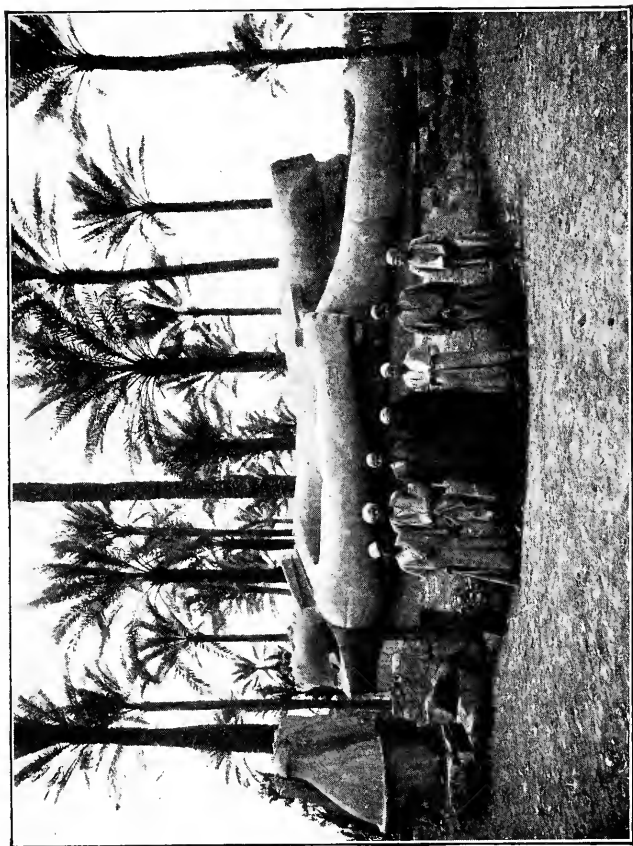


escape, cut down with the sword. Only one man is said to have escaped, and he did so by driving a spur into his horse which leaped over the stone wall into the rubbish of the moat below. The fall is said to have killed the horse, but the rider survived and carried the story of the frightful slaughter to his people. And through it all the Pasha sat in his hall, contemporary records telling that he showed not the least sign of emotion, beyond twitching a piece of paper nervously in his hands, although the cries of the dying must have echoed through his chamber window.

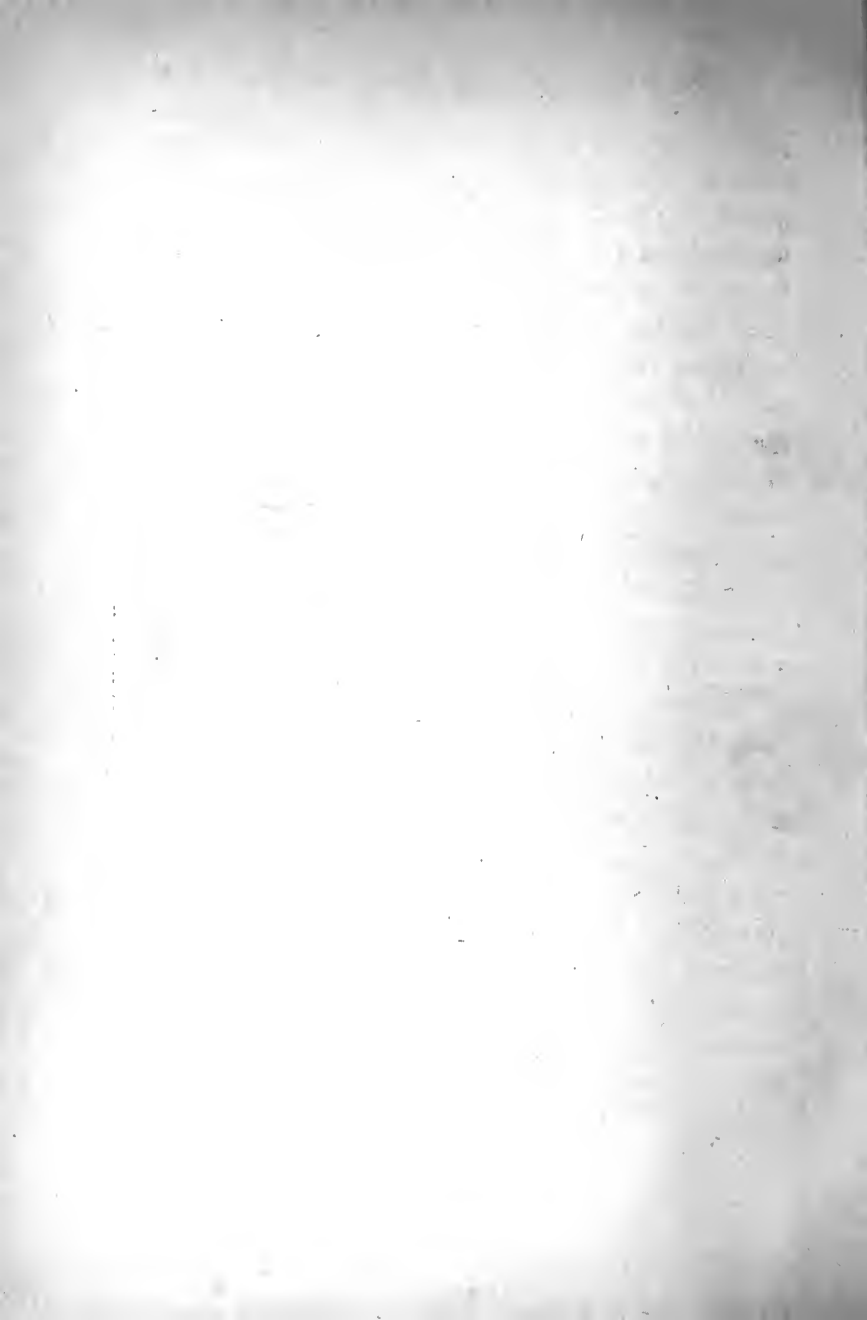
Out in the desert, beyond the Citadel, are the mosque tombs in which the Mamelukes' sultans were placed after death. They are mute things, some of them of splendid design. The sand drifts around them, and they seem to raise their minarets in a silent appeal toward Mecca, but apparently Mecca does not see them. They are rapidly passing to decay, cracking and crumbling, and they would seem to be quite deserted but for the beggars who crawl into their shadows to find protection at night from the winds that blow over the desert, and the tourists who come out from the agencies, for while they were almost overlooked by earlier visitors to Cairo they are now listed as one of the rou-

tine sights of the environs of the capital city, both by day and by night. Perhaps a moonlight night is the best time to see them, for then they appear to be stately ruins, and there is a strange fascination to the drive through the sands that brings one to their bases from the busy streets of Cairo around the midnight hour. But the memory of the Mamelukes is not cherished by the Egyptians, and the feeling is conveyed to Egyptian visitors, who are likely to give their tombs but a glance in even a lengthy itinerary of Cairo.

I went along to the terrace in front of the great yellow marble mosque that bears Mehemet Ali's name. All of Cairo lay out there before me in the yellow sunshine. Away off in the distance the Nile squirmed its way to north and south like a great jeweled serpent. Over beyond it I could see many pyramids, now looking like great cubes of amber. Off to the south was a large group of date-palms like a big green splotch in the yellow sand. That was once the proud city of Memphis, perhaps the oldest metropolis of Egypt. Little remains today of that fortunately situated city, doubtless founded soon after the invading hordes had swept over the land from Arabia in the earliest march of civilization westward, a city "on the opposite



STATUE OF RAMESES II.



side of the river," when crossing the stream was such an important factor in warfare and conquest, one far enough inland to control the rich upper country and yet near enough to the sea to profit by all the good things from the rich Nile Delta. Diodorus speaks of the green meadows of Memphis, its canals and pavements of lotus flowers. Pliny tells of its wonders, and of its wine which became celebrated in foreign lands. Herodotus mentions the gigantic temple of Ptah, but its chief reminder today is the prostrate statue of Rameses II, which doubtless adorned the temple entrance. The statue is forty-two feet in length, and was once presented to the British Museum, but its enormous bulk and weight made transportation impossible, so it lay prostrate in the sand, each year's Nile flood threatening to cover it from sight. Finally, through private subscription in Cairo, it was raised to a height where injury would be impossible on account of floods, and today it lies there seemingly suspended in air, a pathetic spectacle and a reminder of the departed day. The circuit of the city, according to Diodorus, was thirteen miles, but the circumference so described, today closely resembles the rest of the land that borders the Nile, clumps of date-palms, a few ruins, the statue of

Rameses and the tombs of the Apis bulls once worshiped there. Most travelers, however, like to touch their feet on the ancient soil of Memphis, and the short excursion is an easy one, either by boat on the river, or by railway which brings visitors to Badrashen, one of the two villages which marks the ancient site.

As I sat there on the terrace and looked six thousand years behind me, I vowed to visit the Memphite desert again. And the pyramids! I would devote one day to a visit to each of them. The next time I came to the Citadel it should be either at dawn or at night. I wanted to see how magical Cairo would rise from the valley when warmed by the morning sun; just how it would fade from sight after sunset, until the lights of the city began to twinkle along the boulevards and avenues. For I had looked from this height only in the blazing light of day. Yes, and I would wander back to Old Cairo and go back to Rhoda Island again. I dared not prolong the wish even in mind, but I permitted the desire to flash through my thoughts that I could go down to the river's brink and begin the long rise that would again take me to the charmed spots of the upper country. And this musing was fairly typical of that of other days. Each day was crowded full of joys, but each joy



OBELISK OF HELIOPOLIS.





seemed to be freighted with regrets and longings. After all, the time had been too short; and I knew perfectly well that the time would have been too short if it had been twice as long. There was so much to do, so much to see, and the desire to return and repeat observations and experiences was so great that each day and hour only added to the multitude of desires that flooded themselves upon me.

Suddenly in my reverie I glanced off to the north. There was Heliopolis. Yes, I would go there again, if time did not permit me the other ramblings that I was vaguely outlining. Heliopolis! I had remained there two hours, and the wise men of ancient Greece counted it a pleasure to remain for many years in an attempt to absorb its mysteries; and, like other thoughtless tourists, I had glanced at the obelisk of Assuan granite, which I knew marked the site of the city of On of Genesis XII, 45, glanced at the spot where the "Virgin's tree" stood until 1906, the traditional spot where the Holy Mother rested during her flight into Egypt. I had given a passing thought to the fact that the city once boasted the wealthiest and largest temple in Egypt and that the Jewish lad who interpreted the Pharaoh's dream received as his reward the hand of the daughter of the high

priest of this temple. But that was not enough. That visit had been one that the seven-day tripper to Cairo might have paid to the ancient shrine. I would go again. I vowed it, and sit there as I was sitting by the onyx mosque, paying no attention to the people, keeping my ears dumb to the sounds of the present, and straining my eyes to see something of that past which seems to have departed, not to return again.

But this was only the influence of Egypt. I knew well enough when I would leave Egyptian shores, and I knew that I had tarried too long by the wayside to return again to the scenes that left fond memories and the yearning for a revisiting. A bugle's shrill trumpeting brought me back to realities and I began the prowling along the streets that had brought me to the heights of the Citadel. But one reaches the heights only to come back again to the level of a meandering river. It seems to be a law of life; at least a law that is as old as Egypt. And, when I reached the hotel terrace again, it was the fashionable hour for driving and walking. Again the circus parade was passing through the Ezbekiyah, and I ended another Cairo day as I had begun it, full of enjoyment of the hour, but fuller in anticipation of what was yet to come.

## CHAPTER XVII

### BEYOND HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

ONE of the favourite methods of "seeing" Cairo and the vicinity is by tram-car, just as one of the favourite methods of reaching the Sphinx and pyramids at Gizeh is by trolley. Fashions change in Cairo in this matter of transportation, although they seem to remain about the same in everything else. "Motive power" over the vast sandy wastes of the desert is what it must have been when travel began hereabouts. The monuments prove that even the form of the Nile boat, called the *dahabiyeh*, has not changed since those days when ancient kings thought it was necessary to make the journey to the next world in a boat, thus copying it from the only craft they knew, that which covered the breast of the Nile. But the "taint" of civilization has had its effect in the capital city. It is no longer *de rigueur* to mount a donkey in front of one's hotel for a pilgrimage about the streets of the metropolis. Electric cars hum throughout the city over a network of

lines that carry the natives or the visitor almost anywhere that he may care to go. One may see Cairo from these open-air chariots, and one may go to almost any of the shrines of the city's environs in the same way. And the agencies and "progressive" dragomen encourage the practice, so the cars are usually filled from early morning until late at night with a crowd that not only reflects the variety of the population, but also the international character of its visitors.

Trams are usually counted a part of the "desecration" of Cairo by those old-fashioned penmen who would prefer that the upper Nile valley had no water so that Philæ might be preserved, although it might have caused the starvation of the bronze-skinned natives who are thought to be more "picturesque" when they are half-starved, because they have no means of procuring food, and naked, because they cannot afford rags to drape over their shoulders. It is a "shock" to find very clean and well managed trolley cars running hither and thither, but as often observed, this is a land of shocks and surprises, and, like most of the others, this discovery that one may climb into a very comfortable car and slide along to the tune of a clanging bell to the base of a monument

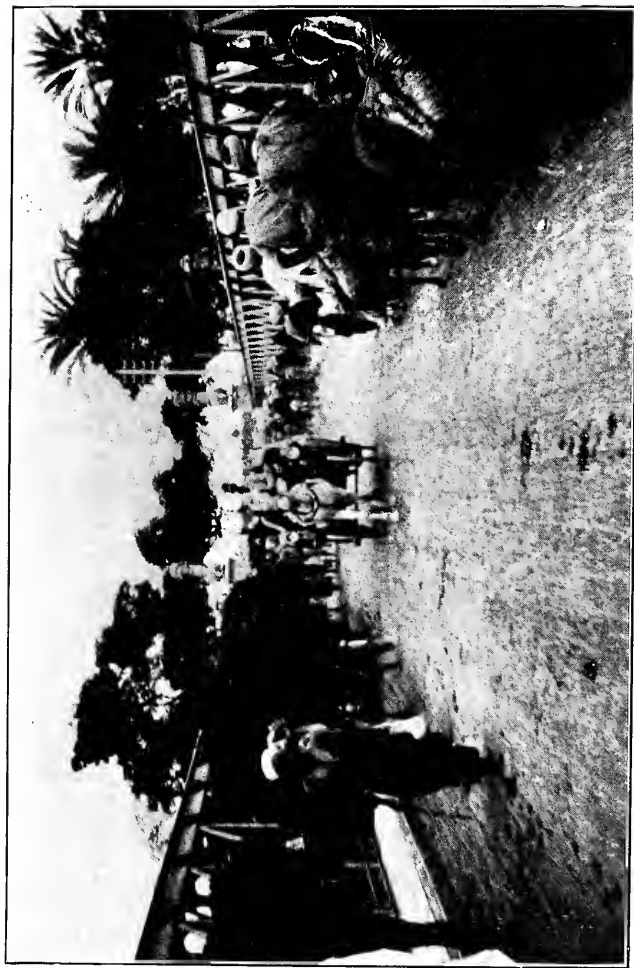
that antedates known human history, is exhilarating and must quicken the thoughts of any one who has not become moss-covered in his contemplation of the past, while remaining blind to the glorious present and future.

The trolley makes it possible for the plodding fellaheen to cover ground in a few minutes that would take them hours, if they dragged their weary legs through the sandy paths, as was formerly a necessity. For a few pennies, the visitor to Cairo may board a car and be whisked away into the sacred past, and although the ride has been much more rapid than could have been the case if he sat upon the back of an Egyptian donkey, with a boy running along at its heels, endeavouring by constant clubbing to keep it in motion, the sacred and ancient spots reached by trolley are just as sacred and ancient as those reached by camel or donkey. And perhaps the shock caused by contact is something that the leisurely and luxurious traveler never feels.

I have visited the Sphinx and the pyramids many times, and I have made the trip from Cairo in many ways, ranging all the way from a stroll, which always has its compensations in Egypt or any other country, and is the most dependable method of transportation known to man. I have come to the base of the great mon-

uments on a camel that deposited me "at the paws of the Sphinx" and then proceeded on its way with the rest of the train into the desert beyond. I have made the journey in a beautifully upholstered landau drawn by Arab steeds, with gaudily bedecked coachmen sitting on the box. I have sat in the shadow of these mighty producers of imagination at all times of day and night and I have viewed them from the short distance of that fashionable hotel near the great pyramid, at dawn, high noon, sunset, twilight and the witching hour of night. And I am not at all certain that the trolley ride from Cairo was not the most enjoyable experience of all. The trolley seems to pass out of the very core of Cairo, and then, by an electric shock, transport the newcomer into the past at least seven thousand years. And where else on earth would such a sensation and realization be possible!

After passing through the always colourful streets and avenues of the city, the car crosses the big iron bridge over the river and soon plunges along a tropical and well-kept park where flowers are always blooming and palms wave their lace-like fronds. Coming down the road is that wonderful procession of the fellaheen bringing their produce to market, or weird



NILE BRIDGE.

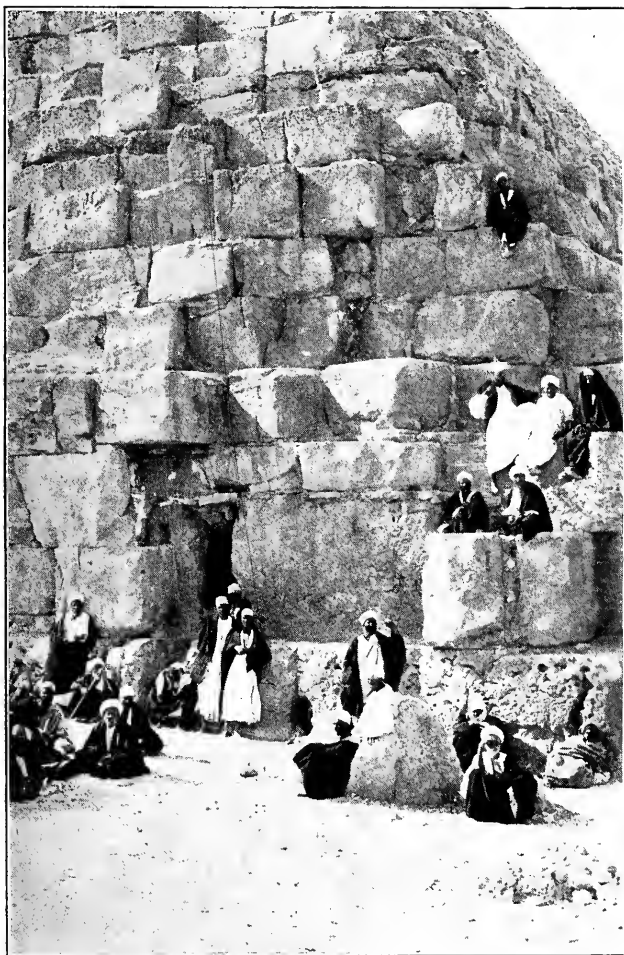




types from the desert who are headed toward the city and either have not the few pennies that would be required of them for carfare or decline to be so extravagant, when time counts for so little and the path is so well paved. As the car passes along the beautiful avenue, bordered by trees and "the best land in Egypt" under intensive cultivation by these sons of the sun, long trains of camels are met at any time of day. They bear burdens of unbelievable bulk and weight and pass disdainfully along, barely glancing at the car unless a motorman clangs the bell to frighten them, causing them to snort and flop their lower lips, apparently in disgust at this modern competition. Their drivers pronounce a vociferous curse upon the drivers of tram-cars, and the yellow man at the front of the car answers him with another clang of the bell. It is said that this beautiful highway to Gizeh was embellished and improved at the time of the visit to Egypt of the Empress Eugénie, whose pilgrimage to this country had much the same effect as the visit of the Kaiser to the Holy Land. Many dates are reckoned from the eventful occasions, and it has not been long enough since that time for roads to have fallen back into their customary condition, for notoriously these Eastern governments are diligent

collectors of taxes for "good roads," and notoriously the funds disappear before they accomplish the object for which they were collected, leaving the roads to become worse and more impassable until that day arrives when some celebrated visitor announces his intention to make a sojourn, whereupon the government, seemingly ashamed of itself for its neglect, makes a few repairs that must last until another royal personage threatens to shake his bones over almost impassable highways.

The trolley deposits its passengers at the end of the avenue of trees, where automobiles and vehicles of all sorts are also obliged to stop. There is a paved circular roadway that curves its way to the great pyramid of Cheops. Just why this charmed way is reserved for the feet of camels and men, with no wheels permitted to touch it, is something of a question. But doubtless it is one of those questions that may be answered by the Arab proverb: "All men must live." There is a so-called sheik of the pyramids, whether self-appointed or born to his honour, I know not; but I do know that unless he is vastly different from all Oriental sheiks, he exacts a plentiful tribute from that mob of Arabs and Bedouins who loiter at the end of the road in wait for the traveler. Usually, when



BEDOUINS AT THE PYRAMIDS.



there is any point of interest in an outlying district in Egypt, Arabia or Syria, an encampment springs up as if by magic, and even the agencies and guide-books advise the stranger to pay at least a slight toll that will be demanded of them.

I have seen these ragged beggars lounging before some stately temple or tomb, which apparently lies so far beyond the beaten path that the government merely exercises "supervision," rising up and demanding fees and their services as guides and servants as if they were showmen before their own tents charging admission for something that they owned. Gizeh is too near to Cairo for the case to be similar, yet the condition is the same for the inexperienced traveler. The flock of men, some of whom have gaily caparisoned camels, and others by the dozen, each of whom protests that he is "the best guide," pounce upon each new arrival and literally hound him into submission. Perhaps he may want to visit the pyramids and Sphinx alone that his first impression and other impressions may not be hampered by the babbling of a "guide" or interpreter. Perhaps he has had some experience with these pestiferous Bedouins who assume to own what has had no owner for thousands of years, and believes that he knows how to deal with them. He antici-

pates that he will defy them. He will threaten to call the police, hit them, or threaten to hit them with his walking-stick or deal more summarily with them if they become too arrogant. But all his experience with others will count for nothing when he comes to the base of the pyramids. Shake your stick at them and they laugh; threaten to report them to the police and they look up with a pitying expression which seems to say: "Why waste your breath and time with such nonsense?" It is a time-honoured privilege this "escorting" of visitors around the ancient cemetery in which a comparatively few tombstones and monuments remain. Just how one obtains the privilege is difficult to tell. One guide told me that his father and grandfather had spent their lives in the same occupation. Another told me that he had left his family far off in the desert only three years ago and come to the pyramids to spend the remainder of his life, although he was a youth of perhaps twenty years. Another "guide," who rode back to Cairo with me one day, owned a first-class store, as stores go in Cairo, but he could not afford to spend his time there, so engaged clerks to operate it for him, while he went daily to the base of the pyramids and joined that bewildering aggregation whose

principal object in life seems to be to annoy travelers and extract money from them either for voluntary services rendered or for making themselves such a nuisance that payment to retire is the result. It is argued that a large percentage of their earnings go to the sheik, and doubtless he, in turn, would protest that he is obliged to pay a heavy tribute to the "man higher up" for retaining his position. But the fact remains that Gizeh is a prosperous little community, as Arab and Bedouin life go, and most of the swarm of men at the end of the avenue doubtless fare better than they would at any other employment.

I am certain, after many experiences, that my first tactics were those that may best recommend themselves to the traveler who wants to enjoy any degree of solitude or privacy. I thought the best way to do would be to pay no attention to the pleas and entreaties and go about my business. There is an open path. One may follow it, and, tramping through the deep sand, one naturally suspects that after a time, even the Arab or Bedouin guide who receives no encouragement or intimation that his services are required, will turn about and look for more lucrative employment. But one who reasons in this way does not know the Oriental

nature. After I had brushed my way through the gesticulating and noisy throng and rapidly ascended the hill towards the great tomb of Cheops, I turned a moment and looked about me. Two men with camels and five guides were at my side and renewed their wrangling and protestations of efficiency. I explained to them that I was coming again to the pyramids many times, and that on other occasions each of them should have the privilege, which they seemed to covet, of showing me about. Yes, I would even ride on the camels, I promised the drivers. But not today! Just for once I wanted to be alone, but I might as well have argued with the stones before me. I hastened on, but they also hastened and kept up their pleading. I hopped over big stones and into the crevices between stones, but the men hopped along at the same gait and the drivers of camels led their awkward beasts by little paths that fetched up at my side when I stopped. It was no use. So I decided to try another method. Picking out the likeliest of the lot, I asked: "What's your name?"

"Me name is Hassan."

"And you say you are a guide?"

"The best guide at the pyramids. These men, they do not spika da English, only pretend.



They say: 'howdy-do, kind meester' but when you say to them: 'how high is that sphin-cus?' they cannot tell, and they do not know what you say, never mind, very good."

"Then, Hassan, you shall be my guide, if you can send all the others away."

Almost before the words left my mouth Hassan was pouring abuse upon the heads of the others.

"Just a minute, Hassan," I interrupted, "what will be your charge?"

"Just what the kind meester wants to give me. A shilling, two shilling, or three, just as you please; never mind, all right."

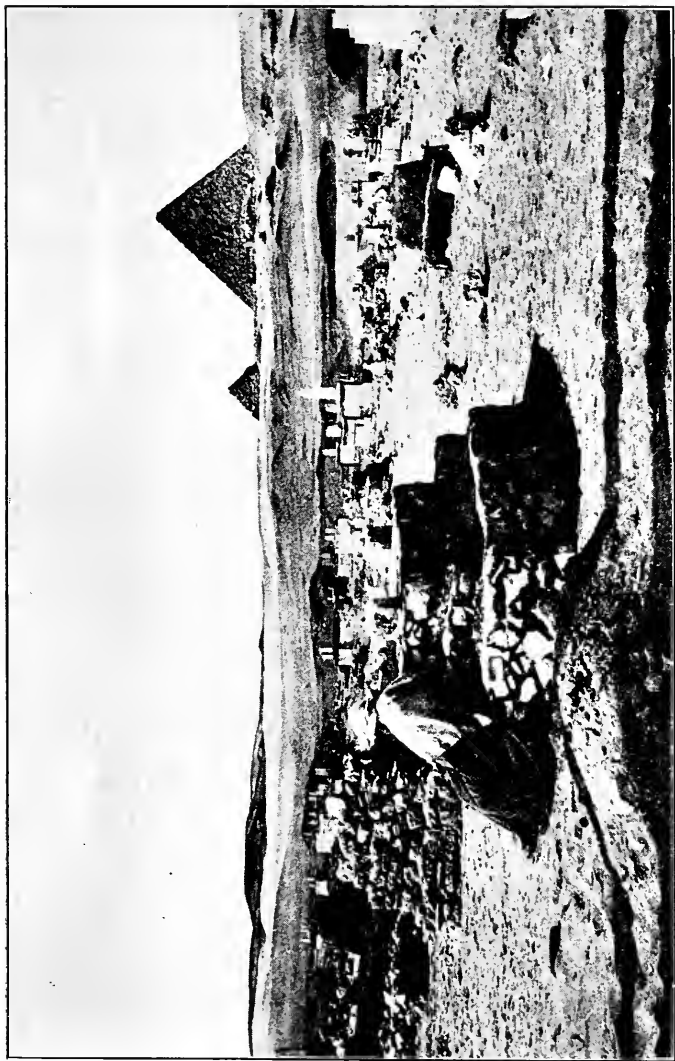
The other men sneered at me, as Hassan grew exasperated. In their lingo, strongly tinted with Arabic, they seemed to be unanimous in the belief that I had picked the poorest guide of all. The camel men assured me that I would grow weary on foot and would be glad to sit in a saddle. But the men evidently did not know that I had sat in a saddle on the back of a camel for fourteen hours at a stretch and the thought of a repetition of that torture was exasperating.

"Hassan, remember, you are my guide only after the others have left," I reminded the stalwart young man, and my words were to his ears

what the bugle is to a trained military horse. He reached over, carefully selected two large rocks and then in a tempestuous tone of voice, warned them to be out of his range in a hurry or he would throw the rocks at them. Now I believed at the time that he meant to do exactly as he threatened to do; and apparently the men were of the same opinion. They scampered over the stone as rapidly as they had come, and doubtless began to pester the next victim who arrived at the end of the road.

Hassan was a quiet fellow. He followed at my heels during the hours that passed, but he spoke only when he was spoken to. I selected my own route and he merely kept close enough to me to make it apparent to any "guides" we met that he was in my employ and that I was being "entertained" in the best Arab or Bedouin fashion. Once or twice some gentleman out of a job came up and began to repeat the "applications for employment" that were so impressive in the first instance, but Hassan was keenly aware of the responsibilities of his position and I let him do the arguing. He was more of an adept at that than any white man may hope to be.

"When the gentleman, he want to climb to the top of the pyramid, I will go with him, but



MOHAMMEDAN CEMETERY, MEMPHIS.



I know the best pyramid climber in Egypt. We will have him, yes?"

"Not today, Hassan, tomorrow or the next day, some other time. Today we will wander about as we are doing now. Tell me, what is this tomb?"

We were in that colossal cemetery of old Memphis. It was not exactly as I had been led to expect. There were the pyramids. We were leaning against the stones of the tremendous pile of Cheops, and away off as far as we could see, there were other pyramids, great rows and groups of them extending along the Nile for twenty-five miles, it being the calculation of the scholars that Egypt had about seventy-five of them that were large enough to be reckoned as world-wonders. But what surprised me first of all was the veritable catacombs that lie at the bases of the great heaps of stone at Gizeh. The rocky ground seems to be literally honey-combed with the tombs now plundered of all they once contained, but doubtless the last resting-places of the courtiers of the day when the pyramids were being built, priestly gentlemen and men whose labours resulted in the time-defying monuments.

One peers into a few of these hewn caverns, sees the inscriptions on the walls understood

only by scholars, but after a while the task seems futile. One would not and could not see them all, and there is an irresistible grandeur to the monster work of them all that draws the visitor back to it. Just as time and space are almost beyond human comprehension, so is this marvelous heap of sandstone. Many myths concerning it have been circulated and come down to us by repetition until there is almost the tendency to believe some of them. There are scholars who maintain that the pyramid of Cheops was built as an astronomical observatory. Others say that its dimensions served as standards of measurement. The most enlightened opinion of today has it, however, that it was merely a stately tomb for a king—this and nothing more. But what a tomb! What a brain to have conceived it, and to have seen it erected in the imagination, when the stone was being quarried and dragged to the heights by slaves forced to do the king's bidding!

The giant was erected about 3733 B. C. Hassan tells me that somebody has figured that it contains about eighty-five million cubic feet of stone. An ancient writer declared that its building required the labour of one hundred thousand men for three months each year for ten years, the supposition being that they were employed

in this manner when the Nile flood was so high that they could not cultivate their fields. Each stone was pulled up the hill, neatly hewn into shape and drawn into place by men who worked beneath the lash. How they groaned and toiled! How can the heap of stone remain so silent when it has known such suffering and pain! And how can anything be so beautiful, awe-inspiring and majestic, when it was produced by such agony and tears! One marvels, but after a while one passes on, as he has done so often before in Egypt. One cannot remain to solve each mystery even to his own satisfaction, for even this would take eternity—and the days pass here as they pass elsewhere.

It is a sandy walk to the second pyramid of the group, which, owing to its location on a knoll, makes it seem to be even larger than that of Cheops. Here was the tomb of Chephren, dating from about 3666 B. C. And on beyond is the third, the pyramid of Mycerinus, dating from 3633 B. C.

Dunes and individuals seem to mean nothing. One sits down in their shade and looks up at their towering peaks with such massive bases. Their colours change. Now in the light of noon they seem to be the yellow of sulphur. One morning they looked like great heaps of snow.

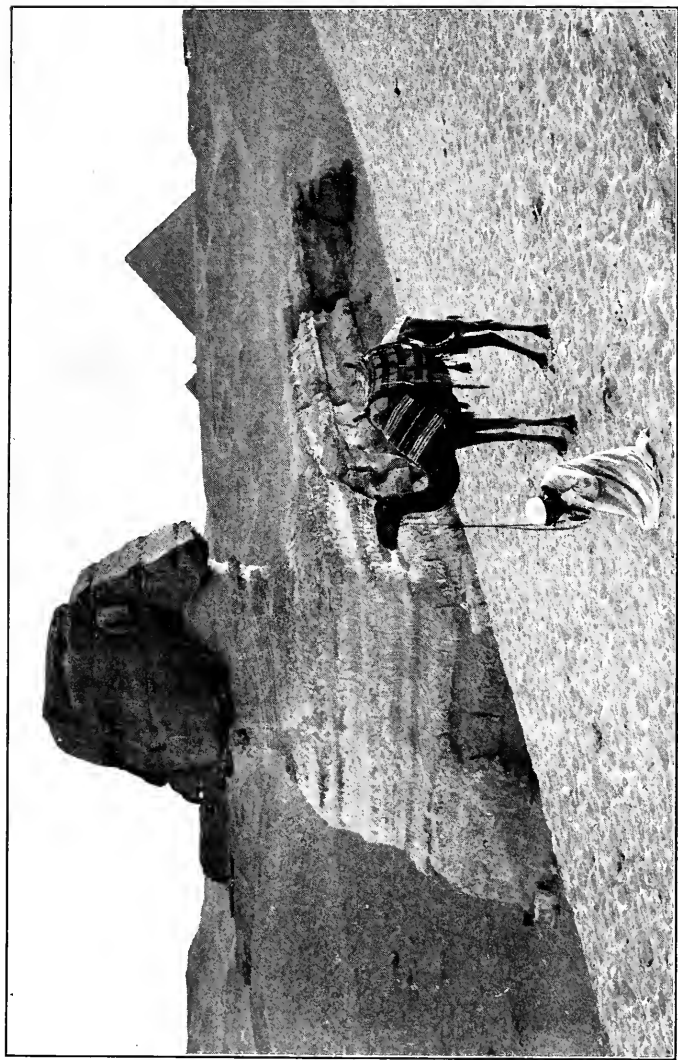
And then at twilight they were flushed with a rose-pink hue that turned to amethyst and mauve as the shadows deepened, finally seeming to be huge mountains of coal.

“They, after all, are the marvels of Egypt,” I said to Hassan, as we plodded along in the sand, after many minutes of silence. Hassan smiled with superior wisdom.

“You have not yet seen the Sphin-cus, meester.” No Arab seems to have mastered the English word for the colossal image of Ra-Harmachis in one syllable. It is the “Sphin-cus” to all of them, even to many Egyptian gentlemen whose English is otherwise perfect and from which even a foreign accent has disappeared.

No, I had not seen the Sphinx. And I had not seen it purposely. Familiar photographs of the pyramids usually show the grim countenance of this most ancient of stone images that bear a human resemblance, and the anticipation of the stranger must be that he will behold one when he sees the other. But this is not so, and one who sees the Sphinx must hunt for him. There he is, stretching his great paws toward the Nile, and, when discovered, he seems to be resting in the shadow of the largest pyramid. Yet one may circle the pyramid and go to those





THE SPHINX.



beyond without coming upon that sinister face that rises majestically from the sand where it was seemingly buried until discovered. The reason is that a mound of sand rises between the base of the pyramid and the image, which lies on the slope of the hill.

“Sphin-cus over there under the hill,” said Hassan pointing to the southeast.

I hesitated, and the Arab thought that I was tired. “Come, meester, and there we can sit in the shade of the Sphin-cus.”

“Yes, Hassan, we can sit there and have a long rest.”

Hassan did not know and he could not have understood. The time had come at last. For months I had been basking in the sunshine of Egypt, enjoying every moment of the experience; but, after all, now that I had arrived within a few yards of the Sphinx, which was still hidden from sight, I felt as if all else had been preparation and probation. During the other days I had been lingering in the courtyard of the temple or merely crossed its threshold. Now I had passed through its inner chambers, arrived at the sanctuary and was about to be initiated into the eternal mystery. I was about to gaze on those features that were old when Abraham came to Egypt, because there was famine in the

land beyond. I was to see the face that directed its grim eyes toward the Nile before Moses was found floating in his ark of bulrushes. At last I was to come into the presence of the image of Ra-Harmachis, the god of the rising sun, the conqueror of darkness, the god that greets the day. And it was not by chance that I had saved it for the end of the program. I knew that I should come back again many times, that I should see the Sphinx in many lights and at many angles; but I also knew that there would be no later impression like the first. It was to be the grand climax of Egypt for me, so I asked the guide to remain far behind. It was noon and there were no tourists about. I would be alone; and, as I went down the hill, I felt as if I was going down the stairway of a temple that would take me to the beginning of the world.

And the Sphinx did not disappoint me. It was as haughty and disdainful as I had been led to believe. If a thousand emperors of this world had passed to pay it homage it would have remained the same. It has suffered disfigurement at the hands of thoughtless men, but otherwise it ignores man's presence on the earth. Man is an upstart by comparison, and this aristocrat of the desert thinks of nothing so short-lived as man. Serene and calm it broods over

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Egypt, for the Nile valley is its home, and it will guard that through eternity.

Maspero told me that, in his opinion, the Sphinx is at least seven thousand years old. An older generation ascribed it to the kings of the middle empire, but when a stele was found recording repairs made upon it by Thothmes IV, it became certain that it belonged to the ancient empire, and it is now the opinion that it dates from the pre-dynastic period. It is hewn out of the living rock, although pieces were added to it where necessary, and it was doubtless suggested to its sculptor by the form of the natural rock. Perhaps its face was painted red, for traces of the ancient scarlet flush still remain, and there are evidences that its head was covered with ornaments which may have had a religious significance. It is seventy feet high, one hundred and fifty feet long, and its face is fourteen feet wide. Mohammedan rulers of Egypt caused its face to be used as a target, and Napoleon's soldiers are said to have fired at it in sport. The nose is gone and the features are defaced. But even the ruthless hand of man cannot alter its superb dignity.

After I had waited beside the Sphinx for an hour, I went on to the temple of the Sphinx, the structure that has been dug from the sand before

the stone creature's paws. And this was but another temple, although perhaps it is the oldest of the Egyptian sanctuaries that remain. It is the opinion of the scholars that there were temples in Egypt perhaps ten thousand years ago on the sites of temples that still raise majestic columns toward the sky. In reality, the principal interest attaching itself to this structure is that it is the best specimen of that architecture which flourished between five thousand and six thousand years ago. Its pillars and halls are not ornamented and it was likely a tomb as well as a house of devotion.

Irresistibly I was drawn back to the Sphinx, even from the temple where priests directed his worship. Again I sat down and looked up at its face and between those paws where an ancient legend says the Holy Mother placed the infant Jesus.

"Meester, he will be very late and there will be no lunch at hotel," cautioned Hassan, when he saw that my attention was directed to a party of tourists climbing down from camels and grouping themselves in front of the great image for the snap of a camera. Suddenly their exclamations about "the funny old boy with a broken nose" and "is it a he or a she?" seemed to break the spell which the Sphinx seemed to

radiate upon one who gazed upon him in silence. I had heard thoughtless tourists make slighting remarks when they observed kneeling Mohammedans in the mosques where they were admitted, often marveling at the patience and calm yellow brothers whose "fanaticism" is a pet topic of the Western peoples. I had even heard silly women with bared faces giggling and simpering in Mohammedan tombs, where the women of the deceased had come to mourn. But never in all of Egypt had anything seemed to be just the desecration of this herd of pleasure-seeking English travelers, conducting themselves as they might have done at a country-fair in their native land or in a Luna Park at home.

I listened to Hassan and departed for the hotel. In the afternoon we entered the great pyramid, not altogether a pleasant experience, and then we climbed to the top. During this latter ordeal, even my guide who had proved himself to be so efficient earlier in the day, seemed quite powerless to keep off the swarm of "helpers," who insisted that although I had a guide and "the best pyramid-climber in Egypt" accompanied me, I also needed a couple of "boosters." We fought off the first noisy applicants for the position, by declining to climb a step so long as they remained, but after we had as-

cended half-way up, two burly Arabs appeared as if they had sprung up from the stones and fell to their self-appointed tasks as if they had been duly engaged. It is no great task to climb the pyramid of Cheops, if one have a guide who directs the route, but a ledge of stone in mid-air is no fit place for a single man considered a "Christian dog" to attempt to quarrel with a group of insistent Mohammedan Arabs. So I was boosted and pulled to the pinnacle of stone, a flat surface about thirty feet square, and whatever annoyance had been caused by the gentlemen who felt that an American had at least a shilling in his pocket that belonged to them, there was compensation in the view of Egypt from the last height that I expected to reach in the land of the Pharaohs.

I knew that it was a farewell glance at the yellow Nile and that yellow country off near Memphis where the thousands of date-palms wave. We sat there until the sun began to fade, Hassan and I, and he did not speak after we had disposed of the assisting brethren who went to look for other clients. Evidently Hassan had told the "pyramid climber" that I was a strange man who did not want to be spoken to, for they sat there silently and patiently with their feet dangling over the side of the carved stones.



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When I gave the signal to start, Hassan said that for one dollar his companion would run down the pyramid and to the top of the second in a very few minutes—I forget the number for I wanted to see no such prowess. There was but one thing I did want, and that was to go down the hill again and bid good-by to Egypt. At least that was the way I felt when I reached the Sphinx again, and left him there alone in the purple glow that was descending about his head. I know that he lay there in the dark, crouching as if about to spring, when the darker night shadows were over him; but then the orchestra was playing in the hotel and I did not go back. I know that he was there in the same position when he greeted the next dawn, but an automobile carried me away without seeing him, and I was soon on my way and aboard a steamer. I know he is there today, and will be there seven thousand years from today as he was seven thousand years ago. And I am glad that I spent my last Egyptian day in his company. When the sunset came, the past faded, and I was back in the present; but I had a glimpse of eternity.



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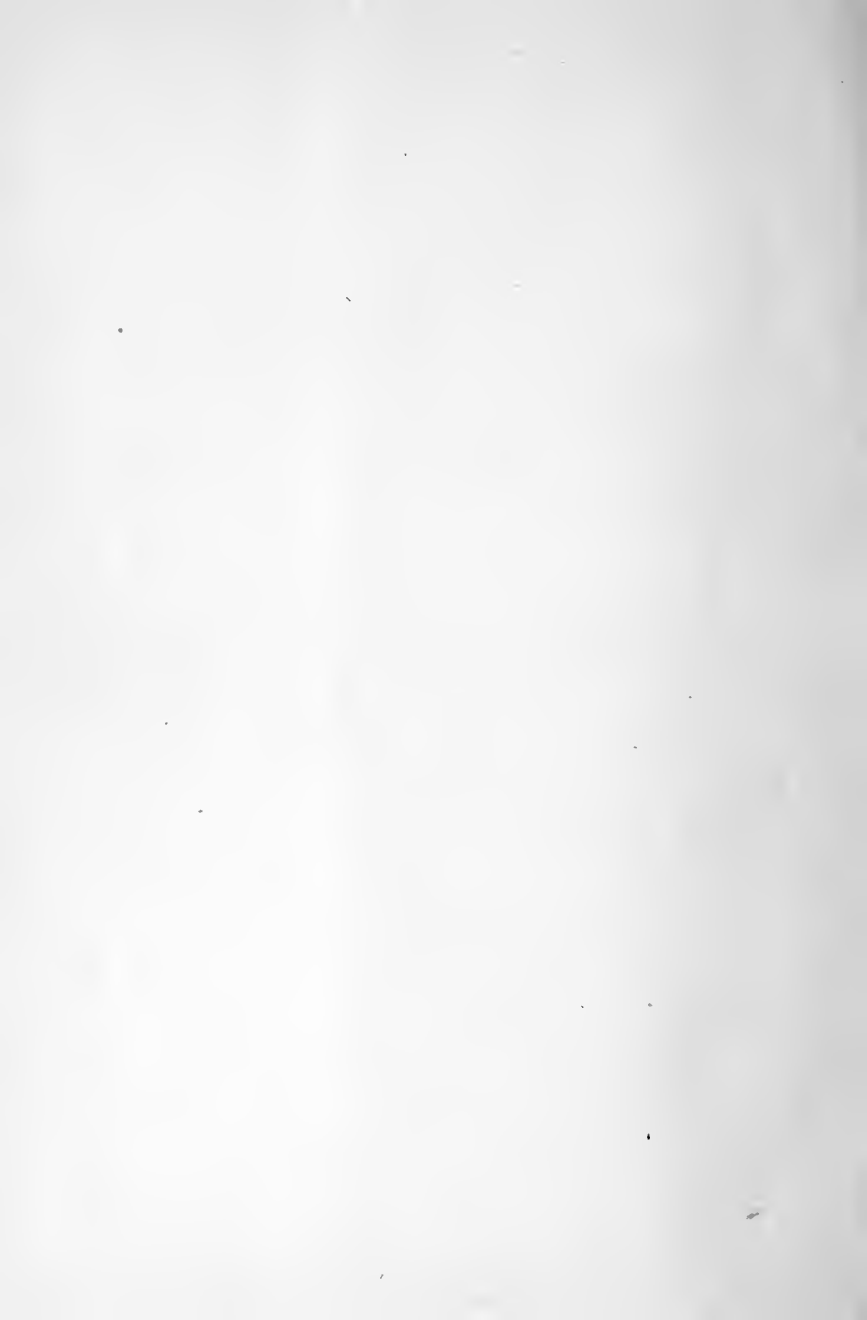
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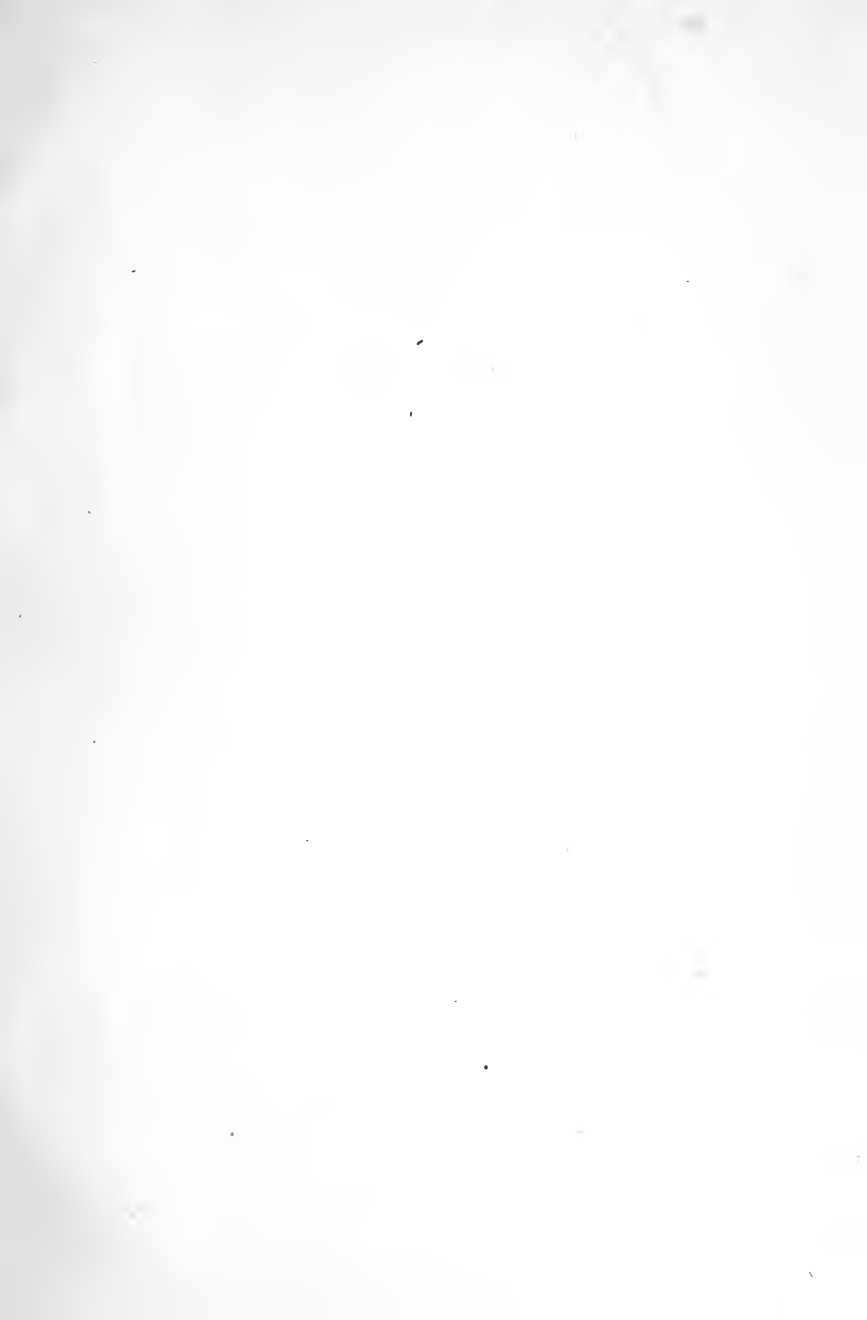












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